The Distin Family and its Influence on the Development of the Brass Band Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain

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Appendix A

Distin Family History & Reviews

A chronological list of nineteenth-century events and performances.

The picture above shows the family group around 1833

1770  The earliest record of the Distin name is from 1770 when the Grandfather, also a John Distin, was born. He had a brother (name unknown) who married into the Langmead family. John William Langmead Distin (1786-1879) was born in Plympton and married Amelia (unknown). They had a son, Granville, who became Mayor of Hamilton, Ontario in 1849 and features later in this appendix when the Distin Family brass ensemble visited Ontario in the same year. Grandfather John Distin was married to Susannah Tucker and this family name also reappears.

1788  Englishman Charles Clagget invented chromatic trumpets and horns by means of a valve system.¹

1798  February 15th. John Henry Distin was born in Plympton, St Mary's, Devon. The bandmaster of the South Devon Militia Band (an official reserve army made up of volunteers) was impressed by John Distin’s talent that he gave him a bugle to play.

1812  At the age of fourteen John Distin was invited to play the trumpet part in a performance of *Dettingen Te Deum* by Handel at a grand musical festival in Exeter in 1812 and was rewarded with a fee of £1023. John Distin was engaged to play principal trumpet in the Sheffield Festival Orchestra.4

1813  The South Devon Militia returned to Plymouth in December 1813 and was demobilized in August 1814.5 John Distin came to London and enlisted in the First Regiment of Foot Guards (later the Grenadiers Guards’ Band)6

1815  J. B. Dupont of Paris invented the first omnitonic horn. Patented in 1818

1815  June 18th. John Distin was with the band of the 1st Guards when the allies occupied Paris after the Battle of Waterloo.

1817  George Fredrick Distin was born in Devon.

1818  Heinrich Stölzel & Freidrich Blühmel took out a joint patent on the valve in Berlin

1819  July 22nd. Henry John Distin was born in London.

1820  John Distin left the Grenadier Guards’ Band to become a member of King George IV’s Household Band.

By special invitation of the Duke of Kent, at the instance of his Majesty George IV he became a member of the private band of the King at the Court of Windsor as trumpet-player and solo bugle-player, a position he held, enjoying the especial favour of the King, until the monarch’s death.7

1822  William Alfred Distin was born in Westminster


1829  March 17th Ann Matilda’s husband, Thomas Edmund Ridgway died and she married John Distin.8

1830  June 26th King George IV died and William IV ascended the throne; The King’s Household Band with forty-two musicians was dismissed.

1830  John received an invitation and accepted the position of Bandmaster for the Marquis of Breadalbane at Taymouth Castle, Loch Tay, in Scotland and went to live there with his sons.9

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4 Sheffield Mercury, August 29th 1812.
7 Ibid.,
8 Marriage certificate.
The first public performance of the young Distins was in 1831 when father John Distin, Master Henry Distin (aged 12) and Master Theodore Distin (aged 8) performed at The Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh not far from their home in Taymouth.

From The Adelphi Calendar Project by Alfred L. Nelson and Gilbert B. Cross we find a listing of artists for 1831:

The Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh 1806 – 1900 Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Entertainers-

DISTIN, Master (m) 1831
DISTIN, John (m) 1831
DISTIN, Master Theodore (m) 1831

December 12th Louisa Rose Distin was born in Gillingham Street, London.

July 17th John Distin performed with the great violin virtuoso, Paganini at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London.

July 31st John Distin performed again, in concert, with Paganini at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London. He performed *The Soldier Tired* (from Artaxerxes 1762) by Thomas Arne.
1832 August 7th Edinburgh. John Distin performed a trumpet solo at The Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh and Master Henry Distin (age 13) and Theodore Distin (aged 9) performed French horn duets.
Appendix A

The Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh 1806 – 1900

Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Entertainers- Music, Composers, And Musicians 1831-1832

Distin, John (trumpet, 7 Aug 1832), Distin, Master Henry (French horn, 7 Aug 1832), Distin, Master Theodore (French horn, 7 Aug 1832),

Concerto: (andante introduction, recitative, slow air of Mozart's Cavatina)


1832 August 13th 13 HER MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY, a Grand Gala in honor of that Anniversary. VAUXHALL GARDENS.

The orchestra is very effective. Mr Distin, who performed upon the trumpet the voice part of 'The Soldier Tired,' drew forth the deserved applause of his auditors; but an encore of such labour seemed a very equivocal sort of reward.

1834 January – June. Henry and William Distin attended the Royal Academy of Music in London for six months studying horn and piano (with Elliott).

1835 July 9th and 10th Edinburgh. The first Distin Family performances at Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh.

On Thursday evening, notwithstanding the rich entertainments spread out upon the boards of the Adelphi, the manager seems to have determined to enhance the mental banquet still farther, by making it something of a princely treat – namely, by introducing Mr Distin, principal trumpet player from the private band of his Majesty George the Fourth, together with his four accomplished sons, the eldest of whom is scarcely out of boyhood. These performers used keyed bugles, French horns, and a trombone, and the beauty and delicacy of the music elicited from these noisy instruments, created both surprise and delight. A divertissement from Rosini’s (sic) opera “Il Turco in Italia’, a concerted piece from “La Gazza Ladra’ (sic), &c., were given with fine effect.’

But the piece which attracted most attention, was the symphonious old Irish air ‘Gramachree’ performed by Mr. Distin on the royal Hibernian horn, an instrument played only by himself. This air in an especial manner, from the delightful execution and sweetness of the music, excited the admiration of the audience, and had to be repeated in obedience to the unanimous call of the house. Mr Distin and his sons again performed yesterday evening.14

1835 August 16th 13 a letter from John Distin to Sir Andrew Barnard, St James's Palace, London from Taymouth Castle:

With all Submission and respect, I have humbly to beg you will condescend to pardon this liberty of addressing you. Knowing Sir that you are one of the patrons and principals of the Royal Academy of Music, I take the liberty of Soliciting your kind interference in my behalf for more time to be granted me in reference to the Debt I owe the institution for the Six months my two Sons were there - believe me Sir when I assure you my principles are and ever will be just and honest; and had I been so fortunate as my predecessors to receive / what we all expected / - a pension for my Services to his late Majesty, I need never have incurred a debt at all, but with my large family I have found it impossible to avoid it - I had during my Stay in London a Complication of difficulties to contend with, more than I could struggle thro' - which induced me to leave it and accept the offer of this Situation from the Marquis of Breadalbane, of one hundred

13 Vauxhall Gardens, August 13th 1832.
14 The Scotsman, Saturday 11th July 1835.
pounds per annum for the Service of the Whole of us, at the Same time being given to understand one guinea was here Equal to three in England, but I have been much deceiver’d finding the Highlands the most expensive part of Scotland, so that instead of being (as I Sincerely hoped and intended, ready and prepared to meet the few debts I unavoidably left unsettled, I found myself gone still farther behind by man Pounds more than my income amounted to, and no means of Extricating myself - I therefore told the Marquis of the inadequacy of the terms to Support and clothe so many, who has made it better worth my while to remain, by allowing me leave of absence to take a few engagements a few months in the year while he is away - and to make a trial of what we cou’d do, I have within these three or four weeks been to Edinburgh, where we have performed with the greatest Eclat ever known before, and by that my leave of absence has expired, could have now been Enabled to have the means of Satisfying the Academy and all to whom I was indebted, as our fame has so spread that I have offers the most tempting from all parts of Ireland at my own terms, but am obliged to defer until my next leave of Absence which will be from next February till June, when Please God I live I shall have ample means to shew my wish to be honorable to all - and if you Sir will kindly condescend to use your great interest in my behalf for the extension of time until then. I shall ever feel bound in the most heartfelt gratitude towards you, I beg to Subscribe myself Honble Sir with the greatest Submission and respect.

Most humbly your very Obt. Servt. J. Distin, late Trumpet and Key Bugle Player in the private band of His Majesty George 4th.

1836 The first known example of a publication specifically for brass band MacFarlane’s Eight Popular Airs for a Brass band, published by R. Cocks & Co. of London in 1836.15

1836 April 13th & 16th Edinburgh. Distin performance announced in *The Scotsman*:

MORNING CONCERT AT THE HOPETOUN ROOMS.

Mr Distin and his four sons beg leave most respectfully to announce to the Nobility and Gentry of Edinburgh, they intend giving a CONCERT, under Distinguished Patronage, on Thursday, April the 21st, on which occasion they will perform several new concerted pieces, solos, duets, etc. Doors to be open at one, and to commence at two o’clock. Principal vocal performers – Misses J. and E. Coveney and Mr M’Lagan. Tickets, 3s 6d each, to be had at all the principal music shops, and of Mr Distin, 30, St James’s Square. 16

Unfortunately, this concert was postponed until 30th April because John Distin became sick.

1836 April 21st Distin performance announced in *The Scotsman*:

Messrs Distin’s Concert - We are sorry to understand that the elder Mr Distin has become suddenly and severely indisposed, in consequence of which the Concert advertised to take place on the 21st, has been postponed till Saturday the 30th curt. We again embrace the opportunity of craving attention to the merits of Mr Distin and his sons, whose celebrated performances have already so justly commanded applause. We need not here notice the many amiable virtues which, we are given to understand, have uniformly distinguished Mr. Distin in public as well as in private life, as meriting in the highest degree the united services and patronage of the public; but we may point out, among many others, the generous and feeling sympathy he lately shewed the suffering whalers in Aberdeen, by devoting the entire proceeds of a night’s benefit to relieve them; and as it is his last appearance in Edinburgh, being on the eve of visiting the continent in his professional capacity, we trust his approaching concert will be patronised as to show Mr Distin that we place a proper estimate upon his unrivalled talents as a performer, and private virtues as a man. 17

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16 *The Scotsman*, Saturday 13th & 16th April 1836.
17 *The Scotsman*, Wednesday 20th April 1836.
1836  John Distin is reported to have performed on the continent. Unfortunately no records of these performances have been found.

1837  June 16th Distin performance announced in Aberdeen, Scotland.\(^{18}\)

We perceive by the Aberdeen Herald that our old friend Distin the trumpeter, has been giving concerts with his two clever boys, who were, when we heard them some time ago, extraordinary horn players for their years, which could scarcely exceed nine and ten. Distin himself is a very fine performer on the trumpet; in tone and execution second only to Harper. The paper alluded to, speaks in terms of great admiration of the perfect unity of the three performers on their several instruments in some concerted pieces arranged expressly for their purpose. His little daughter of five years of age, it seems, also gives much of future excellence as a singer, her pronunciation being remarkably distinct. They are certainly a clever family. The father was one of George 4\(^{th}\)’s celebrated wind band, which the late Mr. Kramer, the director, brought to such a pitch of perfection.

John’s only daughter, Louisa Rose, who was born on 12\(^{th}\) December 1831 was 5½ at the time.

1837  July 28\(^{th}\) Distin performances in Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Forres, and Inverness.

“Provincial concerts and lectures”:\(^{17}\):

Mr. Distin, with his wife, four sons, and infant daughter, have been making a very successful professional tour through Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Forres, and Inverness. Although remarkably clever performers on the horn and trumpet, when we heard them (we allude to the little boys) they must have attained to a rare proficiency, when we find it stated in the (Inverness Courier): “we may repeat what certainly the first musician of the north remarked upon the occasion- ‘taking into consideration the sort of instruments here used, this performance is certainly the greatest musical treat I have ever witnessed, though I have been present at all kinds of concerts.’ This is doubtless much to say.\(^{19}\)

1837  August 11\(^{th}\)  Distins performances in Inverness:

We have had another concert by Mr Distin and Sons. The different concerted pieces, most of which we have not heard before, were done in a masterly style, and executed with the greatest taste and accuracy- Handel’s Water-piece was truly grand. - and had that celebrated master been told that this production would ever be performed on brass instruments, in the style we heard it, he would have considered his informant as extremely ignorant of music, and the compass of these instruments, or have set him down as in a fit state for an asylum. We cannot let this opportunity pass without noticing the masterly performances of Mr Distin on the trumpet, of several vocal pieces; and on that rare instrument the Tenor horn; also of Master Henry Distin, on the French Horn; and on two-keyed bugles, by Mr and Master H. Distin. These were enthusiastically encored. The whole of the performances this evening were much superior to the two former entertainments. We wish Mr Distin and family every success.

1837  September. Distins performances in Glasgow Trades Hall "Provincial concerts":

Thence they travelled through all the principal towns of Scotland, giving concerts down to Liverpool, and thence to Birmingham, where Mr. Distin met with an accident so severe as to disable him for two months. Then they resumed their concert tour, going to Bath and finally back to London.\(^{21}\)

\(^{18}\) *The Musical World*, June 16\(^{th}\) 1837.

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) *The Musical World*, August 11\(^{th}\) 1837.

1837  Distins return to London.

1837  November. Distin performance in the Bath Grand Musical Promenades organized by Mr. John David Loder (Ann Matilda’s brother) held at the Assembly Rooms. The first of four performances was held on November 9th.

Mr. Distin and his Four Sons, whose extraordinary performances have been the theme of admiration and astonishment; on which occasion they will have the honour of introducing some of the most popular music of the day, arranged expressly for their novel and beautiful combination of brass instruments.

Miss Arthur, Miss Smith and Mr. Cody will introduce several favourite glee. Added to which will be a full military band leader Mr Murphy.

Mrs. Distin will preside at the piano-forte.  

The notice of the promenade on Thursday last, must necessarily be brief, as, in our last week’s journal, we distinguished the extraordinary performances of Mr. H. Distin and his father on the French horn and trumpet. In that notice, however, we forgot to mention the two beforenamed gentlemen on the key-bugle, an instrument we have seldom heard played upon with satisfaction to our senses; but, in this instance, we were delighted with the taste, power, and sweetness of tone produced by these gentlemen, in the performance of the first duet ‘All’s well;’ Mr Distin taking the first and his son the second. It was truly well.

1837  December. Distins performances in Concert in the Assembly Rooms, Bristol. The Distin family with the vocalists Miss Russell, Mrs. Elliott, Miss Morris and Mr. Machin.

1838  January. Distins performances in Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The Distins appeared between the two parts of a “Grand Concert” of sacred and miscellaneous music.


1838  February 4th and February 15th Distins performances in two morning concert series at the Argyle Rooms, Regent Street, London:

The performances of Mr Distin and his family sestett which are daily taking place at the Argyle Rooms Regent-street, are well worthy the attention they receive. The combination of bugles, horns, and trombones in a concert room might be presumed too noisy an exhibition for the tender ears of a fashionable auditory, but such is the beautiful tone and perfect understanding between this family of musicians, that unmingled gratification and delight attend their efforts. Mr Distin executed the melody “Oh no, we never mention her,” with the utmost finish, and produced a tone so exquisite that it still haunts the memory.

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22 The Musical World, September 1837.
23 Bath Chronicle, November 9th 1837.
24 The Musical World, November 1837.
25 The Bristol Mercury, December 23 1847.
26 Theatrical Observer, January 1838.
28 The Musical World, February 9th 1838.
29 Lady’s Magazine and Museum no. 12, February 1838.

Ray Farr

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Appendix A

1838 February. Distins performances in Willy's Room, King Street, St. James. The Distin family and the Rainer family with Mrs. Distin on the piano.\(^{30}\)

1838 February to April\(^{31}\) the Distins and the Rainer family gave a series of 60 concerts in London Argyle Rooms, Regent Street & Willis’s Rooms.

Mr. Distin and his four sons commence their series of concerts on Monday. The performance of the music of Mozart, Rossini, Bellini, Weber, &c, arranged for a brass band will prove a novelty, and that of Mr. Distin and his sons not less so.\(^{32}\)

The performances of Mr. Distin and his family sestetto… 'such is the beautiful tone and perfect understanding between this family of musicians that unmingled gratification and delight attend their efforts. Mr. Distin executed the melody *Oh no, we never mention her.*\(^{33}\)

1838 March. Distins performances in St. James Theatre, London. The Distin family among others.\(^{34}\)

1838 March. Distins performances in Hanover Square room Grand miscellaneous concert of vocal and instrumental music (in aid of the choral fund). Distin father and sons. Also appeared: H. Phillips (voice), Blagrove (violin), M. B. Hawes (voice), Mrs. Knyvett (voice).\(^{35}\)

1838 March 13\(^{\text{th}}\) & 15\(^{\text{th}}\) Distin performances in Star Assembly Rooms, Oxford\(^{36}\)

1838 March. Distins performances in Theatre Royal Covent Garden, 22nd Public Anniversary Festival, for the Covent Garden theatrical fund. The Distin family among numerous other artists.\(^{37}\)

1838 April 17\(^{\text{th}}\) Distin performance in

The Distins (we believe there are six) are exceedingly clever. . .both father and sons combine so much purity and delicacy of tone with their neatness and rapidity of execution that the pieces are as soft and delightful as ‘music on the waters’. It would have almost seemed incredible to us, if we had not heard them, that upon horns, trumpets, and trombone a difficult recitative, a graceful melody, and an intricate *cabaletta* could have been accomplished with as much facility and precision as with the human voice. Rapid divisions, chromatic passages, distances, &c. are all executed with amazing distinctness and brilliancy.\(^{38}\)

1838 April 19\(^{\text{th}}\) Distins performances in London

WILLIS’S ROOMS.- The performances of Mr Distin and his clever family, aided by the additional attractions of the Rainer family, continue to receive the patronage their merits so richly deserve. Scarcely any public entertainment offers a more pleasant mode for passing an hour; it is an exhibition seductive both to professors and amateurs.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{30}\) *John Bull*, February 18\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{31}\) *The Musical World*, February 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) 1838.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.,

\(^{33}\) Ibid., April 19\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{34}\) *Theatrical*, March 10\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{35}\) *The Idler and Breakfast Table Companion*, March 24 1838.

\(^{36}\) *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, March 10\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{37}\) *John Bull*, March 25\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{38}\) *The Morning Post*, April 17\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.

\(^{39}\) *The Musical World*, April 19\(^{\text{th}}\) 1838.
1838 May. Distins performances in Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, Mr. Ransford’s benefit. The Distin family, Mrs. G. Wood, Mr. George Le Jeune, Mr. W. J. Hammond, Mr. Frederic Chatterton (the celebrated harpist). The concert would take place after the play "King Lear".

1838 May. Distins performances in The Coliseum (morning and evening performances).

1838 May. Distins performances in Gloucester Hotel, Bristol, Miss Myers’ Grand evening concert. The Distin family, Sig. Martini, the Hungarian singers, and Miss McMahon.

1838 June. Distins performances in Freemason's Hall, London, for the Drury-Lane Theatrical Fund dinner.

The Distin family occupied one of the extreme tables; the regular professional gentlemen were in the usual situations at dinners of this description.

1838 June 28th Queen Victoria (1819-1901) took over the throne after the death of her uncle William IV (1765-1837).

1838 July. Distins performances in New Strand Theatre. The Distin family, Master Viotti, and Linley Collins (after a burletta).

1838 September 11th and 15th Distins performances in the Corn Exchange, Hanging Ditch, Manchester. The Distin family (with Mrs. Distin on the piano), and the Collins family (with Miss Rossini Collins the extraordinary violinist, Mr. Collins on the flute, Mrs. Collins on the piano, Misses E. and Victoria Collins would sing).

1838 October 6th Distin ‘Farewell Concert’ in the Theatre Royal, Manchester

1838 October. Distins performance review

…they have not been well patronized. They are a deserving and meritorious family, but are apparently doomed to be unfortunate. We could wish “The light of other days”, which is so ably executed by young Distin on the French Horn, would shine on them. The Strauss, when in London, completely put out their light, and caused them to try the provinces for support. We hope in other towns they will be more successful.

1838 October. Distins performances in Town Hall, Leeds. The Distin family and Miss Russell (voice).

1838 November 30th Distins performances in Pontefract.

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40 The Age, May 13th 1838.
41 The Musical World, 22nd May 1838.
42 The Bristol Mercury, May 12th 1838.
43 The Derby Mercury, June 6th 1838.
44 The Observer, June 3rd 1838.
45 The Age, July 8th 1838.
46 The Manchester Times and Gazette, September 8th 1838.
47 Ibid., October 6th 1838.
48 The Age, October 28th 1838.
49 The Leeds Mercury, November 3rd 1838.
50 Ibid.,
**1838** November 1\(^{st}\) Distins performances in Leeds Music Hall.

These unrivalled performers on the trumpet (the Distins) gave a concert last evening, in the Music Hall, on which occasion they performed a selection of their most admired concerted pieces, duets, &c. to a fashionable and tolerably numerous audience. The frequent encores testified that the performers gave entire satisfaction.\(^{51}\)

**1838** November 22\(^{nd}\) Distins performances in Halifax, New Assembly Rooms. The Distin family (father with sons and wife). During the concerts also appeared Miss Russell (voice), Mrs. Cummins (voice) and Mr. Hopkinson (piano). John Distin played solos on the trumpet and his sons played on the French horns.

The Distins are a clever family, but especially Mrs. and Mr. Distin. The trumpet solos of the father, and the French-horn performances of his talented sons, were loudly applauded.\(^{52}\)

**1838** December.\(^{53}\) Distins performances in Liverpool

At Liverpool, on Monday last, Baker took his benefit, the house was crammed. The Distin Family are playing here with great success.

**1839** February 26\(^{th}\) Distin performances at Theatre Royal, Dublin

One of the most interesting exhibitions which we have seen............The concert terminated with ‘God save the Queen’, by the brass band of the Distin family.\(^{54}\)

Grand Concerted piece- ‘Recit, Fatal Goffredo’ ed Aria ‘Io Ludia’ from the opera of Toquato Tasso by the Distin Family – Donizetti.\(^{55}\)

**1839** March 2\(^{nd}\) Distin performance at Theatre Royal, Dublin

Concerted Piece- ‘Mira O Norma a tuoi Ginnochi’ from the Italian opera of Norma on five brass instruments, by Mr Distin and his four sons – nightly encored – Bellini.\(^{56}\)

**1841** January 2\(^{nd}\) Distin recommends sea sickness remedy:
Having arrived from Glasgow, per the steam-ship Jupiter, in this stormy season, without the slightest sea-sickness, we feel bound to attribute this exemption to the most agreeable effervescent draughts of your solution of Magnesia and Acidulated Syrup, which were kindly furnished to us by that attentive officer, Captain Ellis.\(^{57}\)

**1841** June 12\(^{th}\) Distin performance at the Green Dragon, Newport.\(^{58}\)

**1839** January Distin performance in Aberdeen.\(^{59}\)

**1839** William Handley published 24 *Favorite Airs for Brass Band*.

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\(^{51}\) *The Musical World*, November 1\(^{st}\) 1838.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., November 22\(^{nd}\) 1838.

\(^{53}\) *Actors by Daylight*, December 1838.

\(^{54}\) *Freeman’s Journal & Daily Commercial Advertiser*, February 26\(^{th}\) 1839.

\(^{55}\) Ibid, February 27\(^{th}\) 1839.

\(^{56}\) Ibid, March 1\(^{st}\) 1839.

\(^{57}\) *The Bristol Mercury*, January 2\(^{nd}\) 1841.

\(^{58}\) *Hampshire Advertiser & Salisbury Guardian*, June 12\(^{th}\) 1841.

\(^{59}\) *The Age*, January 13\(^{th}\) 1839.
1839 End of February - beginning of March 1839. Distins performances in Theatre Royal, Dublin (eight evening concerts of which the last took place March 9).

The performances started with a comic piece. On March 4 the comic piece was Peter the Great and the Grand Concert consisted of the following: PART I: Strauss Waltzes by the orchestra, and "Homage à la reine de la grand Bretagne", Mira o Norma a tuoi Ginocchi from Bellini's Norma arranged for the Distin quintet. Duet What's a' the steer by Misses A. and J. Hyland. Air on the French horn Lullaby by Storace played by Henry Distin. A Madrigal sung by several singers. Air on the trumpet O, no, we never mention her by Bishop played by John Distin. The Tear sung by Mr. Hudson. Echo Hunting Duet played by William and Henry Distin, composed by John Distin. The Highland Fling by Miss Raine and Mr. Bologna. PART II: Dr. Arne's Fantasia on the trumpet The Soldier Tired played by John Distin. We'll go no more a roving by Miss A. Hyland. Balfe’s air on the French Horn The light of other days by a member of the Distin family. A selection from Macbeth performed by the entire musical strength of the company. Introduction and Medley introducing various Irish melodies by the Distin quintet. Grand concerted pieces from the opera Torquatto Tasso of Donizetti by the Distin family. The Minstrel Boy by Miss A. Hyland. Finale, God save the King by the Distin family. The entertainment closed with the pantomime of the Goblin Dwarf or Harlequin's Vision, and the Genii of the moon, also with the Pas de deux from the pantomime of Mother Goose, and the laughable School-boy scene from Harlequin and the Ocean Queen.60

60 Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, March 4th 1839.
1839 March 1st & 2nd Distins performances in Theatre Royal, Dublin. Grand Concert after the performance of a comic piece. The Distin family (with Mrs. Distin on the piano), with Mrs. Fitzwilliam (voice) and Misses Hyland, a chorus, and an orchestra.

The Distins performed: concerted piece *Mira O Norma a tuo Ginocchi* from *Norma* by Bellini, air *Lullaby* by Henry Distin on the French horn, air on the trumpet *O No. We Never Mention Her* by Bishop (John Distin), *Echo Hunting Duet* (H. and W. on the French horns), Dr. Arne's fantasia on the trumpet *The Soldier Tired*, Balfe's air on the French horn (Mr. Distin by desire) *The Light of Other Days. Introduction and Medley* on the national airs *The Minstrel Boy, St. Patrick's Day, The Groves of Blarney*, and *Garry Owen* (Distin family), grand concerted piece *Recitative Fatal Goffredo* and aria *Io Ludia* from the opera *Torquato Tasso* of Donizetti (Distin Family), and finale with *God Save the Queen* (Distin family).  

1839 March 9th Distins performance in a Grand Concert, Theatre Royal, Dublin.

The Distin Family, Mrs. R. H. Bishop (voice), Miss Riviere (piano accompaniment), Mr. Boscha (harp), Senor Huertn (guitar), Misses Hyland (voice). A grand concert. Between the parts the comic interlude *Comfortable Lodgings* was performed.  

1839 March. Distins performance in Cork.  

1839 May. Distins performance in Dublin.  

1839 June 13th Distin performance in Waterford, Ireland

…the citizens of Waterford never had such a treat presented to them before as the performances of this highly accomplished family have afforded. June 15th

This interesting and talented family gave the first of two Concerts in the Assembly Rooms, Tholsel, yesterday the 15th… Hearing is believing.

Henry Distin played two solos *Cie Pietoso* on French horn and *The Light of Other Days* by Balfe on the walking-stick cornetto. Henry and William played: “*The Echo Hunting duet’.*

1839 June 13th Distin performance in Waterford

Notwithstanding all that has been said and written of this talented and accomplished family, every new hearer will be struck with some particular excellence in one or the other, peculiarly distinguishing them from all other performers in the same line. Nothing but the most unremitting practice, joined to a peculiarly felicitous adaptation of lip, could enable the elder Distin to produce such an exceedingly beautiful tone as he does, and this excellence, partly the result of long study, seems to be inherited by his sons, some of whom in this respect are little inferior to himself. On the whole, the citizens of Waterford never had such a treat presented to them before as the performances of this highly accomplished family have afforded.

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61 *Figaro London*, March 11th 1839.
62 See poster for Theatre Royal, Dublin, 1839
64 *The Age*, March 24th 1839.
67 Ibid., June 20th 1839.
1839 June 15th. Distin performance in Tholsel, Kilkenny, Ireland. Father Distin, sons, Mrs. Distin (piano accompaniment) and Eliza Hamilton (voice), and Mrs. Wood (voice).

This interesting and talented family gave the first of two concerts in the Assembly Rooms, Tholsel, yesterday 15th. Notwithstanding the panegyrics (?) which our metropolitan and provincial contemporaries have, within the last few weeks, bestowed on the extraordinary proficiency which the Distins have attained in the use of brass instruments, we are free to admit that we were somewhat sceptical: as, however, in this instance, ‘hearing is believing’, we do not now hesitate to add our humble meed in trumpeting fame so well deserved. With a knowledge that perseverance will overcome great difficulties, we are led to admire Mr. Distin’s excellence, rather as the result of indefatigable exertions than as wonderful natural ability; but it must be otherwise with regard to his children, the eldest of whom has scarcely reached manhood, and the youngest but just in his teens, who possess almost all the talent of their father without a possibility of having had a fourth of his practice – a fact alike credible to each, proving as it does the efficiency of the tutor and the surprising capabilities of his pupils. Two solos by Mr. H. Distin (“Ciel Pietoso’, on the French Horn, and Balfe’s favourite air ‘The Light of other days’, on a walking-stick cornetto) were most beautifully played, and deservedly well receive, as also ‘The Echo Hunting duet,’ with Mr. W. Distin.

1839 July 4th. Distin performance in Rotundo, Dublin, Grand morning concert. The Distin family, Miss Hamilton (voice), Mrs. Corri and Mr. Corri, their two children (voice), and a young lady at her first appearance.

Let the bright Seraphim (sung by Miss Hamilton and accompanied on the trumpet by Mr. Distin), The Soldier Tired, The Light of Other Days (H. Distin on the walking-stick cornetto).

1839 August. Distin performance in Killarney, Ireland. The Distin family and Madame Heyden Corri (piano).

1839 September. Distin performance in Tralee. The Distin family and Misses Smith (voice).

1839 October. Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Abbey Street, Dublin, Ireland. The Distin Family, Miss Coveney, Mr. Pitt (voice). The Soldier Tired, The light of other days (H. Distin on the walking-stick cornetto).

1839 November. Distin performance in Great Assembly Room, York, York subscription concerts. The Distin Family, Miss Russell (voice). A Cavatina (Miss Russell), an air by Bellini (Henry on the French horn), the air Oh no, we never mention her (John Distin on the trumpet), the Echo Hunting duet (Henry and William on the French horns), When the dew is on the grass from I Puritani by Bellini (by the Distins). Solo on the trumpet, The Soldier Tired (John), Handel's Water Piece (the Distins). The concert closed with God Save the Queen.

1839 December. Distin performance in Assembly Room of the Commercial Buildings, Belfast. The Distin family with Misses Hyland (voice).

69 Ibid., June 20th 1838.
70 Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, July 2nd and July 5th 1839.
71 Ibid., August 22nd 1839.
72 The Age, September 15th, 1839.
73 Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, October 18th 1839.
74 The Belfast Newsletter, December 3rd 1839.
75 The Belfast Newsletter, December 3rd 1839.
1840  The British railway system became established.


This talented and justly-celebrated family gave their first concert here this season, in the Trades’ Hall, on Wednesday evening last, the 30th ult., and nothing could exceed the success of the several performers, and the high gratification which the lovers of music must have enjoyed on the occasion. “The light of other days”, played by Mr. H. Distin on the patent walking stick Cornetto, was given with such beauty and effect that it was enthusiastically encored. Mr. Distin, sen.; performed on the trumpet, a fantasia, in which he executed the whole of the voice part of “The Soldier Tired,” without missing a single quaver in the difficult triplets. On Friday evening he performed a fantasia equally difficult for that instrument, the voice part of “The Spirit of my sainted sire.” The Distins were assisted in the vocal department, by the Misses Hyland (late of the Theatre Royal Edinburgh), who sung “We’re owre young to marry yet,” “The Keel Row,” and “I’ve wandered in dreams,” in a way which fully supported their deserved reputation as vocalists. On the whole, we have hardly ever been present at a concert where the audience more unequivocally expressed their delight. 76

1840  February 10th Distin performance in Glasgow Trades’ Hall

‘This talented and justly-celebrated family..’

In Glasgow Henry Distin played a solo *The Light of Other Days* by Balfe on the patent walking stick cornetto again and John Distin played on the trumpet: *The Soldier Tired* ‘without missing a single quaver..’ and *The Spirit of My Sainted Sire*.

On the whole, we have hardly ever been present at a concert where the audience more unequivocally expressed their delight. 77

1840  February 11th Distin performance in the Coffeehouse Assembly Rooms Carlisle.

We feel bound to speak in the highest terms of the performance of the Distin family. Their music is of Mr. Distin’s own arrangement, and of course adapted to the powers of the performers; and is considered, by the cognoscenti, to be of first-rate excellence in this respect.

76 *The Musical World*. February 6th 1840.
77 Ibid.
Appendix A

The programme content was deemed, by the critic, to be too highbrow: ‘...music of a learned, and therefore, to most, an unintelligible character. ’ The instruments used in the concert were: ‘trumpet, bugle, cornopean, or cornetto, horn and trombone’.  

1840 February 15th Distin performance in Carlisle

Philharmonic Society’s Concert

The fourth concert of the Philharmonic Society, given in the Coffee House Assembly room, on Tuesday last, was numerously and respectfully attended, and if we may judge from the clapping, stamping, whistling, and shouting of encores, appears to have given very great satisfaction. We feel bound to speak in the highest terms of the performance of the Distin family; and the more so, because we unfortunately omitted all notice of the last Concert, at which these eminent musicians also assisted. Mr. Distin, we believe, is nearly the first, if not the first, performer in the kingdom on the trumpet. He was during many years a member of George 4th’s band; and was principal trumpeter at her present Majesty’s coronation. Each of the young men is clever as a solo performer; and together they make a most delightful quintett (sic). Their music is of Mr. Distin’s own arrangement, and of course adapted to the powers of the performers; and is considered, by the cognoscenti, to be of first rate excellence in this respect. To us, who frankly confess we know little of the mysteries of counterpoint, or of the dark arcana (sic) of thorough bass, or the labyrinthine entanglements of fugue and canon – to us, the most remarkable feature in their performance is the exquisite qualities of sound they produce; that of the trumpet, in particular, is pure, liquid, and silvery, as ‘lover’s tongues by night;’ it recalls the impressions we receive in reading of the trump of the Archangel, or the passage in the Pentateuch, where the lightnings (sic) and thunders are described as playing around Sinai, and when the voice of the trumpet waxed longer and louder, then God spake.

Indeed, so exquisite is the tone of these performers, whether on trumpet, bugle, horn, trombone, cornopean, or cornetto, all of which were successfully employed, that we defy anyone, even those utterly ignorant of music, to be otherwise than delighted with the mere power and influence of sound. And when this pre-eminent beauty is allied to good music, to good poetry, to national and other airs, recalling old associations, and giving birth to the play of the heart’s best emotions, it does, indeed, present a luxurious treat; and this treat, we are sure, the public amply enjoyed. Apropos of associations, national airs, etc. – would it not be wise of the Committee or Leader, to sprinkle a rather larger proportion of these in the evening’s entertainment? The inhabitants of small towns have not the chance of becoming acquainted with opera music, and cannot at first relish elaborate concerted pieces; and we are pretty sure we speak the language of nine-tenths of those who usually attend these concerts, when we state that a few good songs or pieces of that character, with plenty of Scotch airs, sung, or played, would give more delight than music of a learned, and therefore, an unintelligible character. The Band of the Society only took a small share of the work of the evening. The two glee[s] went off very agreeably; and the overtures were pretty well played, although sometimes there was a confusion of noises which we can scarcely think is what is meant by harmony. This ought not to have occurred; and we think the tuning of the instruments ought not to have taken place in the room. We merely offer these hints in the spirit of kindness; and it is always more pleasing to us to praise than to blame, however slightly, this very deserving Society, to whom, both Committee Leader, and Members of the Band, we think the public generally are largely indebted.

1840 February 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, & 28th Distin performance in the Theatre Royal, Newcastle upon Tyne.

78 The Musical World, February 27th 1840.
79 Carlisle Journal, February 15th 1840.
80 The Musical World, February 27th 1840.
81 Newcastle Courant, February 21st 1840.
THEATRE ROYAL NEWCASTLE - by Desire and under the Patronage of THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR, and in Aid of the Funds for THE ERECTION OF A CLOCK IN THE MASTER MARINER’S ASYLUM, TYNEMOUTH. LAST NIGHT OF THE ENGAGEMENT of the celebrated DISTIN FAMILY namely, Mr Distin (the first Trumpet Player in Europe), and his Four Sons, the unrivalled Brass Quintette Performers!!

The Distin family…elicited universal approbation.’ ‘As a brass band, it is certainly the finest we have heard’. John Distin played The Soldier Tired and Oh no, we never mention her. Henry Distin played The Light of Other Days by Balfe on the patent walking stick (cornetto). ‘This was beautiful in the extreme. The Performance was under the patronage of the Mayor of Newcastle’ and ‘Proceeds from the concert were put towards a clock for the Master Mariner’s Asylum at Tynemouth.

1840 February 24th Distin performance in Newcastle.

On Monday evening, the celebrated Distin Family made their first appearance on our stage. Mr. Distin’s performances on the trumpet, especially “The Soldier t’id’ drew down repeated bursts of applause. The concerted pieces, from Bellini and Rossini, by the Family, five in number, were finely played, and elicited much approbation. The most singular performance of the night, however, was the Echo Hunting Duet, on two French horns, in which the responses were given by the same performers, with admirable skill and effect, and produced a rapturous encore. Balfe’s beautiful air, “The Light of Other Days’, played by Mr. H. Distin on his father’s patent walking-stick Cornetto, was also encored. The performances concluded with ‘God save the Queen’, played in splendid style, the audience standing. They made their second appearance on Wednesday evening, and will close their engagement this (Friday) evening, under the patronage of the Mayor.82

The mayor was John Carr. A further concert at the Theatre Royal was announced for Friday 28th February 1840.83

82 *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, February 22nd 1840.
83 *Newcastle Courant*, February 28th 1840.
Appendix A

A statue of the Duke of Northumberland and the clock tower financed from the proceeds of the Distin performance.

1840 March 5th Distin performance in Newcastle. The family quintet, Mrs. Distin (piano), Mdlle. Schiller (voice), and D. W. King (voice).

Under the immediate patronage of the Right Worshipful The mayor. Assembly Rooms, Newcastle. Grand Concert, in aid of the funds of those two valuable institutions, the Infirmary and the Dispensary!!! It is respectfully announced that a Grand Evening Concert will take place on Thursday next, March 5th by the Celebrated Distin Family, who have kindly offered to perform in aid of the above funds. They will be assisted in the vocal department by Mademoiselle Schiller, (from Berlin) and Mr. D. W. King. Tickets, five shillings each. Full particulars in the programmes.84

1840 Distin performance in the Music Hall, Hull (four concerts of the Choral Society). The Distin quintet, Mdlle Schiller (voice), Mr. J. Parry jun., Mrs. Toulmin and Mrs. Distin (piano). Aria, The light of other days (Henry on the horn), Fantasia and solo on the trumpet” (John on the trumpet), Echo hunting duet (Henry and William on the French horns).85

1840 April 7th. Distin performance in Hull. Distin performance at the Choral Society with Mr. J. Parry junr., Mrs. Toulmin, and Mdlle Schiller.86

1840 April 10th Distin performance in Music Hall, Jarratt Street, Hull. Distin Family performance with Mrs. Distin on the piano and Mdlle Schiller (voice).87


The inhabitants of Doncaster and the neighbourhood have lately experienced a rich treat from the performances of the Distin family, who gave a concert at the Mansion House. The performance presented selections concerted pieces from our best masters, interspersed with some vocal music, sung by Mdlle. Schiller. The musical talent of the whole family is proverbial, and the precision

84 Newcastle Journal, Feb 29th 1840.
85 The Musical World, April 1840 and The Hall Packet, April 10th 1840.
86 The Hull Packet, April 10th 1840.
87 Ibid.,
and spirit with which their concerted pieces were performed is truly admirable. The trumpet obligato to ‘Let the bright seraphim,’ and the celebrated solo in which was introduced the whole of the voice part of ‘The Soldier Tired,’ by Mr. Distin, were the most finished performances we have ever heard, and his command of the bugle was equally astonishing. Mdlle. Schiller will improve as she acquires confidence. Some of her notes are exceedingly sweet, and with cultivation her powers of voice will much increase. Mr. H. Distin’s aria on the French horn, and the ‘Echo Hunting Duet,’ on the same instrument, by Mr. H and Mr. W. Distin, were exceedingly well played, and were loudly applauded. In the last named pieces the responses were given by the same performers, and were the most perfect echoes that could be imagined. Indeed, we heard several of the audience insist that the echoes were given from an adjoining room, so perfectly were they given. ‘The Light of other Days’ was played in beautiful style, by Mr. H. Distin, on Distin’s patent walking stick cornetto, an instrument invented by one of the family. The concert concluded with ‘God save the Queen,’ which was performed in very superior style, by the whole force of the Distin family.88

88 The Musical World, April 16th 1840.

1840 May Distin performance in Worcester

We have this week experienced a treat of no ordinary character in the rich entertainments provided at the theatre. On Monday evening, after the play of Therese, which was well sustained in all its characters a grand concert was given by the Distin family. From the established fame of these unrivalled performers we had been led to expect something good; but the event surprised and almost astonished us. The concerted pieces were ‘Mira O Norma,’ ‘La Luna Il Sol Le Stelle,’ et ‘No Matilde,’ et ‘Fra Poco a Me.’ The manner in which these compositions were given afforded a specimen of perhaps the finest brass instrumentation which it is possible to produce; the chromatic and staccato passages were given with the utmost distinctness and accuracy, whilst in the crescendos and diminuendos these instruments (hitherto looked upon as obstinate, harsh, and most fitting for the ‘stern minstrelsy of war’) produced tones of exquisite sweetness and finish – led on by Mr. Distin on the bugle, from whose brazen throat he ‘discoursed most excellent music’ at times commanding the uncontrollable admiration of the audience by the richest bursts of harmony, and then gradually drawing aside the imprisoned soul by the plaintive and flute-like softness imparted to each note as it glided, almost imperceptibly, into the succeeding one. The audience were riveted with minute attention,

‘And took in strains that might create a soul - Under the ribs of death’

We shall not easily forget the cadenzas, nor indeed the anima of the whole concerted performance. But we must pass on a short notice of some of the other pieces. The aria, ‘Meco Tu Vieni O Misera,’ was given by Mr. H Distin, on the French horn, in a finished manner; he afterwards played ‘The Light of other Days,’ on a walking stick cornetto, which air was rapturously encored, and very justly so. But who that heard ‘Oh no, we never mention her,’ by Mr. Distin, on the trumpet, will forget the impassioned feeling and delicious tenderness of his silvery notes throughout this admired air, and the most difficult shake (performed entirely by the lip) at its conclusion? But perhaps the great gun of the evening was ‘The Soldier Tired,’ by Mr. Distin, on the same instrument. This piece produced more of astonishment than any other sensation, from the accuracy and brilliancy with which the triplets and other difficult passages were performed, rivalling the best execution that we ever heard on the keyed instrument! An echo hunting duet, by Messrs. H. and W. Distin, carried us over Alpine mountains, amid the signals and distant responses of the hunters. We cannot bestow too much praise on the mastery displayed in keeping up this illusion so completely and distinctly. The brass performances concluded with the National Anthem, the whole company standing.

It is with pleasure we notice that the spirited manager, Mr. Bennett, in obedience to the urgent public wish, has succeeded in re-engaging the Distin family for two other nights (Thursday and Friday) this week.89

89 Ibid., May 7th 1840.
Appendix A

1840 May 11th 90 Distin performance in the Hereford City Arms Hotel.

The Distin family gave a concert in the City Arms Hotel on Monday evening, the 11th inst., and by their performance both astonished and delighted a large and highly respectable audience. ‘Soldier Tired’ was executed by Mr. Distin on the trumpet in a manner which excited universal admiration. As a specimen of brass instrumentation, the performance of the father and sons may be considered perfect.91

1840 May 27th Distin performance in Wolverhampton

The Distin Concert. The inhabitants of this town had the opportunity of enjoying a rich musical treat on Wednesday evening last. Among the parts which were greeted with the most applause was Handel’s piece ‘Let the bright seraphim,’ which was sung by Mdle. Schiller, accompanied on the trumpet by Mr. Distin, whose execution was masterly. It could scarcely have been supposed that her soft ethereal voice could have been accompanied, even in the most rapid and difficult passages, by notes sometimes so very soft and at others so expressively sonorous, as those produced by Mr. Distin. The brilliance of the execution and accuracy of expression surpassed our previous conceptions of the effect of brass instrumental music. Mdle. Schiller has a voice of considerable range and power, together with great sweetness of tone; she appeared to manage her part with infinite ease and elicited rapturous applause in all her pieces. In the ‘Echo Hunting duet,’ by Messrs. H and W. Distin on the French horn, the responses (by the same performers) had a singular effect. Mr. Distin’s solo in the trumpet, in the voice part of Arne’s ‘Soldier Tired,’ was beyond comparison, the most superb of the kind, and the most perfect imitation of the human voice we ever remember to have heard – it was the ne plus ultra of brass music. Balfe’s ‘Light of other days,’ was played by Mr. H. Distin on his walking stick cornetto, and the plaintive air seemed well adapted to the instrument; it was loudly encored, and repeated accordingly. From the position Wolverhampton has held in the musical world of late years, Mr. Distin, no doubt, expected to be remunerated; but, we regret to say, we believe that the expenses occurred were hardly covered by the receipts.92

1840 June. Distin performance in Birmingham

The Distin family are now giving several performances in this town. The management of the trumpet by the elder Distin, who contrives to give the whole of the triplets and turns in the ‘Soldier Tired,’ with the utmost precision, is very wonderful, but not more so than the performances of his sons on the French horn and the cornetto. The horn that these performers employ, we may remark, is the plain old three-note instrument, without a single mechanical appliance; and yet there is not a note or semitone in the gamut that they do not contrive to elicit from it. The Echo duet is the most curious exercise that we ever happened to hear. The echo part sounds as if it came from some hill or valley half a mile distant. The effect resembles to most perfect ventriloquy.93

1840 June. Distin performance in Cheltenham

The celebrated Distin family have given three grand concerts during the past week, in conjunction with Mme. Este, from Drury-lane, and Mdle. Schiller, from Berlin. The programme exhibited a very choice selection of pieces, and the time occupied in the performance was about two hours. The unrivalled talent of the Distins on their brass instruments is too well known for us to enlarge on now, but we may just mention one or two parts in which we think they excelled at the late concerts. The aria on the French horn ‘Meco Tu Vieni O Misera,’ by Mr. H. Distin, was truly wonderful; the exquisite shake which he introduced must have astonished any common performer on that instrument. The ‘Echo Hunting Duet,’ we look upon more as a curiosity – a production of singular effects – than as a piece of harmonious composition, but of the manner in which it was

90 The Musical World May 21st 1840 p.326.
91 Ibid., May 21st 1840.
92 Ibid., June 4th 1840.
93 Ibid., June 18th 1840 p. 390.

Ray Farr 20
executed we cannot speak too highly. The “no we never mention her,” and “Soldier Tired,” as performed by Mr. Distin, drew forth beauties from the trumpet, which, up to the time of hearing Mr. Distin, we could not have supposed it possessed. “The Light of other days,” by Mr. H. Distin, on his walking stick cornetto, was chastely and expressively given.  


1840  September. Distin performance in Ludlow. The Distin Family with Mdlle Este (voice).  

1840  October 19th – 21st Distin performance in Bristol.  

1840  November 27th. Distin performance in Truro.

THE DISTIN FAMILY. This celebrated musical family performed at the Assembly-room, Truro, on Wednesday evening, to a large and highly respectable company. The performance consisted of some beautiful Quartettes, by Mr Distin and his four sons, on Trumpets, French Horns, and Trombone. The effect of this fine combination of wind instruments was beyond expression, and soul-thrilling. The Trumpet, in Mr Distin’s hands is one of the most sublimely effective instruments that can well be imagined: and its powers were especially manifested in the *obligato* accompaniment to Handel’s “Let the bright Seraphim,” and in the celebrated Fantasia “The Soldier tired of wars alarms,” in which Mr Distin played the entire vocal part. This was encored: but we can scarcely select a portion of the evening’s performance that would not have received a like compliment, had feelings of gratification alone been consulted by the delighted audience. An Echo Duet on French Horns was beautifully given: as was also a Solo, “The light of other days,” on a newly invented instrument of great pureness and delicacy of tone, and capability of expression, called the Walking-stick Cornetto. The vocal performances consisted of several pleasing songs and bravura, sung with skill, taste, and great power and purity of tone, by Mrs Este. Nor can we withhold our praise from a less prominent, though not less important portion of the concert, the accompaniment on the Piano Forte: in which Mrs Distin - sister of Mr Loder - displayed great care and judgement. We cheerfully accord our thanks to the Lady who rendered a subordinate, but all-important part in concerted harmony, so efficient an auxiliary to the general effect. At the conclusion of the performances, the company were more than amused by the Buffo Glee, “*Vadasi via di qua,*” sung by Mrs Este and the Distin Family: after which the National Anthem was given very effectively, by the full corps. The company expressed themselves highly delighted with the whole performance: and were glad to hear an announcement of another concert at Truro on Wednesday next. Meanwhile, the Family will make their tour through the west: and we doubt not they will be greeted by large companies. While an occasional visit to Cornwall must be advantageous to eminent musical artists, it is an evident accommodation to the inhabitants to have the rich treats which their performances afford, made available, as it were, at our own doors.

1840  November Distin performance in Truro.

THE DISTIN CONCERT. The Distin Family gave a second concert at Truro on Wednesday evening. It was attended by a large company: and the performances fully justified the
commendations which we bestowed upon this talented family in our last number. We had fully prepared a much longer report, but we have no room for it.


1841 January 7th a setback for the group occurred when it was announced:

Mr. Distin, THE TRUMPETER has a very severe attack of erysipelas in the head and face, and we are sorry to learn that the medical attendants despair of his recovery.

Consequently the concert performances on January 8th & 9th 1841 in Taunton Assembly Rooms took place without John and received the following review:

The brothers Distin fully sustained their distinguished reputation.

1841 January 8th & 9th Distin performance in Taunton

‘GREAT MUSICAL TREAT

Mr. Kingsbury’s Evening and morning concerts, are fixed to take place on Friday and Saturday, the 8th and 9th of January, 1841 AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, TAUNTON. The celebrated DISTIN FAMILY will perform their much admired QUINTETTE, and other Selections, assisted in the Vocal Department by MRS. ESTE, (Of the Philharmonic and Nobility’s Concerts, the Theatres, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, &c.) and Mr. KINGSBURY, Who will also play Thalberg’s Fantasia, Mose in Egitto, (by desire) Mrs. DISTIN will preside at the Piano Forte. The evening Concert to commence at half-past seven o’clock, on Friday, and on Saturday morning at one. Tickets for the Evening Concert 4s 6d. each; Family ditto, to admit five, £1. For the morning 6s. Family ditto, to admit four, £1. 1s. to be obtained of Mr. F. Kingsbury, and at the principal Music Shops.

1841 January. Distin performance in Taunton

The concert at the Assembly Room, on Friday evening, was numerously and respectably attended. The absence through illness, of Mr. Distin, was explained, and Mr. Carpenter’s professional aid was announced as the substitute. The performances elicited much applause, and the brothers’ Distin evoked the plaudits and encores of the audience by their masterly skill on the horns. Mr F. Kingsbury played one of Huntén’s Fantasias from Semiramis in excellent taste and with great truth of touch, and brilliancy of effect, and subsequently performed the Fantasia from “Mose in Egitto”, which likewise obtained for him high commendation. Mrs Este assisted in the Concert with her vocal abilities. To the intense cold of Saturday morning, and the non-appearance of Mr. Distin, may no doubt be attributed the thin company present on that occasion.

1841 January. Distin performance in Taunton

103 Erysipelas is a form of cellulitis, a bacterial infection affecting the most superficial layers of the skin.


104 The Musical World, January 28th 1841 P. 60.

105 Taunton Courier, January 6th 1841.

106 Ibid., January 13th 1841.
Mr. F. Kingsbury’s concerts – these concerts, the first given by our talented townsman, Mr. F. Kingsbury, took place in the Assembly Rooms on Friday and Saturday, the 8th and 9th inst.; and although several circumstances conspired to against them (not the least of which was the alarming illness of Mr. Distin, who otherwise would have taken a prominent part in each) the attendances were numerous and highly respectable. The brothers Distin fully sustained their distinguished reputation.  

1841 March 2nd Distin performance in Congdon's Royal Subscription Rooms, Exeter. Evening concert for the benefit of the Distin family. The Distin family, Mrs. Este (voice), and Mrs. Distin (piano).  

1841 March 25th and 29th. Distin performance in Weymouth  

Fortunately, by March 31st 1841, John had recovered fully to appear in concerts at Weymouth Royal Hotel.  

A rich treat was afforded the lovers of music in the concerts given by the Distin family, at the Royal Hotel, on the evening of the 25th and the morning of the 29th instant, and which were fully attended by all the rank and fashion of this delightful watering place and it’s immediate neighbourhood. The degree of excellence to which this talented family have arrived is truly astonishing, particularly in the concerted pieces of Rossini and Bellini, which were performed with a skill that nothing but the most intense labour could have accomplished. The “Echo Hunting duet,” on two French horns, by Messrs. H. and W. Distin, was admirably performed, and the effect was so managed that the sound seemed to be borne on the air from a vast distance. Balfe’s Air “The Light of other Days,” was played by Mr. H. Distin on his walking stick cornetto, with great taste and richness of tone, and was most justly encored. “The Soldier Tired,” by Mr. Distin, drew down repeated bursts of applause, and was truly a masterpiece of performance.  

The performance throughout sustained the high character of this eminent family.  

1841 April 26th Distin performance in Salisbury Assembly Rooms.  

On Monday last, the Distin family gave an evening concert at the Assembly rooms, when a highly respectable audience expressed themselves much pleased with the entertainment provided. The elder Mr. Distin’s performance on the trumpet displayed the most perfect mastery of this difficult instrument. The efforts of Mr. H. and W. Distin on the French horn were little, if at all inferior - and the Quartets and Quintets by the whole family were performed with a taste and precision that commanded the admiration of all present. A second concert took place at the Theatre on Friday evening, in the presence of a crowded and elegant auditory.  

1841 May 8th -15th Distin performance in Bath. A series of seven afternoon performances at the Grand Pump Room.  

With those extraordinary and highly-accomplished musical artistes, the Distin Family.  

Some concerts have taken place at the Great Pump-room during the past week, when the performers have been one family – the Distins – father and three sons, assisted by the mother on the pianoforte. They have already obtained such celebrity in town and in the provinces, that to praise them would be likely to draw forth the same remark as was made on the panegyrist of  

107 The Musical World, January 28th 1841.  
108 Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post, February 25th 1841.  
110 Ibid., April 18th 1841.  
111 Ibid., May 6th 1841 p.301.  
112 Bath Chronicle May 6th 1841.
Hercules – “Qui vituperavit?” The father on Saturday played “Oh no, we never mention her,’ on the trumpet, with a most determined encore. It was as much marked by tenderness and expression as could have been conveyed by the violin, violoncello, or clarionet; while the crescendo and diminuendo were even more conspicuous and affecting than on those expressive and almost vocal instruments. The ‘Echo Hunting duet,’ the ‘Hymn from Massaniello,’ the “Light of other days,” and numerous pieces by Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, Ricci, Auber, Storace, Bishop and Balfe, have daily drawn down thundering plaudits from the first-rate musical connoisseurs in the city.\footnote{The Musical World, May 20th 1841.}

A series of seven concerts was commenced on Saturday afternoon, by the highly accomplished Distin family, and the performances of these masters of the bugle, French horn, trumpet, trombone, &c., received that meed of applause which their pre-eminent talents, and the spirited efforts of the lessees so highly merit.\footnote{Ibid., May 13th 1841.}

1841 June 23rd & 24th Distin performance in Southampton

The Distin family gave two concerts on Wednesday and Thursday, at the Royal Victoria Assembly Rooms, which were very fashionably attended. These accomplished performers produce, on the most difficult instruments in ordinary hands, the grandest and most harmonious effects. Mr. Distin, the elder, was formerly principal trumpet in George the Fourth’s private band, and his execution excels all we had ever supposed possible to accomplish with the instrument. His performance on the keyed bugle is rich in the extreme. His eldest son on the trombone, Mr. H. Distin on the cornet-a-piston, and two other sons on French horns, are all distinguished for splendid execution, exquisite tone, and a precision as if the effect of but one instrument. The applause was as great as it was deserved. Mr. H. Distin performed Balfe’s Air – ‘The Light of Other Days,’ on a new instrument called Distin’s Walking Stick Cornetto: it is played somewhat in the clarinet fashion, and was very highly admired. The combined effect of the different instruments is as novel as it is beautiful, and the audience were alternately entranced by the softest and most delicious melody, or roused to enthusiasm by the brilliancy, expression, and force of the grander compositions.\footnote{Ibid., July 1st 1841.}

1841 July. Distin performance in Royal Victoria Assembly Rooms, Southampton\footnote{Ibid., July 1841 p.14.}

1841 July 13th Distin performance in Salisbury Theatre.

\textbf{Appendix A}
The Distin family, whose performances were lately so attractive, returned to this city last week, and were welcomed by every lover of musical talent and perfection. Their first entertainment this week was given at the theatre, on Tuesday evening; and a numerous and highly respectable assemblage evinced the gratification they enjoyed, by warm and reiterated plaudits. The Poet tells us that “music hath charms to soothe the savage breast;” – it is the merit of the Distin family to delight the ear of the experience musician. ... In fact, the whole entertainment, notwithstanding the comparative disadvantage of sound in the Theatre contrasted with the Assembly Rooms, was the theme of general and unanimous admiration.¹¹⁷

1841 November 4th & 5th. Distin performances at The Theatre, Woodbridge.¹¹⁸

1841 November 10th Distin performance in Ipswich. The Distin family, Miss Josephine Davies (Wheatstone's patent concertina, voice), Mrs Distin (piano accompaniment), a Regiment band.

A concert was given by the Distin family on Wednesday, with their usual success. Mrs Distin presided at the pianoforte.¹¹⁹

Introduction of Henry's walking stick cornetto.

Part I: Auber's "Overture" Sermont (the military band), Balfe's cavatina from Falstaff (J. Davies), quintet from from Donizetti's Torquatto Tasso (Distins), song Night at sea (J. Davies), Solo on the horn by Bellini (Henry), Handel's Let the bight Seraphim (J. Davies and trumpet obligato by Mr. Distin), Echo hunting duet (Henry and William on the French horns), fantasia (J. Davies on the concertina), quartet (brothers Distin), Musard's quadrille Les Danuis (military band). Part II: Musard's quadrille Titi (military band), "Fantasia" on the trumpet (J. Distin), "Fantasia" on the concertina (J. Davies), Balfe's air The light of other days on the walking stick cornetto (H. Distin), song (J. Davies), Jullien's waltz Le Rossignol (solo piccolo Herr Frisch), Kent's anthem Blessed he Thou (Distins), ballad Look for my Fairest (J. Davies), quintet from Donizetti's Lucia di Lamermoor "Fra poco a me", Herr Frisch's cavalry gallopade (military band), Martini's glee (J. Davies and the Distins, God save the Queen (Distins).¹²⁰

1841 Distin performance in The Theatre Royal Norwich¹²¹

The celebrated Distin family gave Concerts.

1841 December 17th Distin performance in Norwich. A choral concert for the benefit of the Sick, Poor and District Visiting Society. Mr. Distin appeared at a concert among other performers. Part I: Donizetti's quintet "Tu non sai" from Marino Faliero (Distins), Marliani's cavatina "Stanca di pin" (Miss Spence), solo on the French horn (Henry), Handel's Let the bright Seraphim (Miss Spence, and trumpet obligato by Mr. Distin), Echo hunting duet.¹²²

1842 January 12th Distin performance in Burghley House, Stamford, Lincolnshire

Concert by the Distin Family and Miss Josephine Davies.¹²³

PARTE PRIMA

¹¹⁷ The Musical World, July 22nd 1841 p.61.
¹¹⁸ The Ipswich Journal, October 23rd 1841.
¹²⁰ Ibid., November 1841 and The Ipswich Journal November 6th 1841.
¹²¹ The Chronicles of an Old Playhouse, 1903.
¹²³ The Morning Post, January 15th 1842.
Appendix A

Quintette, ‘Mira O Norma’ (Norma) Bellini
Quartette ‘Hymn from Massaniello’ Auber
Quintette, ‘Quando di Sangue Tinto’ (Balisario) Donizetti
Quartette, ‘Vive Tu’ (Anna Bolena) Donizetti
Quintette, ‘Fra Poco a Me’ (Lucia di Lammermoor) Donizetti
Quartette (Prize Glee) ‘Harmony’ Beale
Quintette ‘La Luna il Sol lo Stelle et no Matilde’ Bellini and Rossini

PARTE SECONDA
Fantasia on the Concertina
Solo (French Horn) Aria, ‘Meco Tu Vieni O Misera (La Straniera) Bellini
Air (Trumpet) ‘O, no, we never mention her’ Bishop
Echo Hunting Duet (two French Horns) Distins
Fantasy for Concertina
Fantasy (Trumpet) ‘The Soldier Tired’ Arne
The National Anthem

The great hall was the scene of the drama.

1842 April 5th and 6th Distin performance in the Lecture Hall, Warwick, Derby. The Distin family, with Miss Josephine Davies (on Wheatstone's patent concertina), and Mrs. Distin on the piano.124

1842 April. Distin performance in Chesterfield

The musical public of this vicinity have been delighted during the present week by two concerts, in which the Distin family have ‘discoursed most excellent music,’ and the audience has on each occasion been numerous, and highly respectable. The performance commenced with a concerted piece by Donizetti, and gave a promise of excellence in the remaining pieces, which to say the least, was fully justified by the event. The elder Distin’s trumpet passages were of course the grand features; and the surpassing richness of his tones, with the precision of his execution, could scarcely have been conceived…. Mr H. Distin followed with the aria of Bellini ‘Meco tu Vieni,’ on the French horn, eliciting loud plaudits. The next performance was that glorious song of Handel ‘Let the bright Seraphim,’ in which the vocal part was creditably performed by Miss Davies, and nothing could surpass the excellence of the elder Distin’s trumpet obligato. An agreeable variety was produced by the next performance, a hunting duet by Mr H. and Mr. W Distin (composed by Mr Distin, sen.) on two French horns, in which every passage was echoed in a novel and beautiful manner. A Fantasia from Rossini by Miss Davies, was followed by Donizetti’s quintet, ‘Quando di sangue tinto,’ by the Distins, which was a fine specimen of their finished style of playing.

The second part began with a fantasia on Dr. Arne’s ‘Soldier Tired,’ executed by Mr. Distin sen., in a style beyond all praise. Mr. H. Distin’s French horn solo was justly appreciated. Another fine performance by the Distins was the quartet ‘Creda si misere,’ from ‘I Puritani.’ In this piece, next after the excellent trumpet playing of the elder Distin, the trombone performance was most admired. Martini’s pleasant ‘Laughing Glee’ drew down an ungainsayable (sic) encore; and the majestic music of the national anthem, nobly performed, finished the entertainment.125

1842 April. Distin performance in Belper, Ashbourn, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Wirksworth, Buxton. The Distin family with Miss Josephine Davies (on Wheatstone's patent concertina), and Mrs. Distin on the piano.126

1842 April 13th Distin performances in The Athenaeum Rooms Derby.

124 The Derby Mercury, March 30th 1842.
125 The Musical World, April 17th 1842.
126 The Derby Mercury, March 30th 1842.
Mr. Distin, is utterly without rival in his mastery over the trumpet, perhaps the most intractable of all instruments. In his hands it is made subservient to every intonation; from the passage which starts the hearer like an electric shock, to the softest cadence. His execution is wonderful—brilliant energetic and thrilling; and anon, delicate, and smooth, and finished too, by, unquestionably, the most perfect shake we ever heard. His finest performance is, perhaps, his celebrated solo, the voice part of “The Soldier Tired”. No one who witnessed it, and possesses the smallest appreciation of what real excellence is, can easily forget the effect produced. It is a performance full of true genius, and we were glad to see it acknowledged by the audience last week at the concerts given in the Athenaum—room, in this town.  

1842 April. Distin performances in Town Hall Derby.  

'A concert was given in the Town-hall on Tuesday 12th instant, which was well attended. The instrumental portion was ably supported by Mr. Distin and his four sons, who, as a choir of brass instrumentalists, are scarcely equalled, and certainly not rivalled, by any performers in Europe. They gave a variety of very pleasing pieces with complete effect, and elicited the warmest applause. Mrs Distin presided at the pianoforte.'  

1842 July. Distin performance in Worcester  

Some very attractive concerts have been given here during the past week, by the talented Distin family, whose fine quality of tone and execution, not less than the material of the instruments on which they perform, have won for them the distinctive appellation of “the silver band’. Mr H. Distin introduced, on this occasion, a novel instrument called a tenorcorno, partaking somewhat of the combined nature of the trumpet a French horn, on which he played several airs, with great skill and perfection. Mrs Distin accompanied on the piano and the whole elicited the warmest applause from numerous and distinguished audiences.  

1842 July 19th Distin performance in Worcester  

The Distin family, have recently given several very attractive concerts here, and in the towns and villages of our vicinity, which have had a sensible effect upon the spirits of the population, and most agreeably broken the monotony of provincial life. Last night they performed for the benefit of the Worcester Infirmary, when a very numerous audience attended, and a handsome sum was collected for the charity, the applause was unanimous, and the entertainment of the evening most gratifying for all parties. This talented family leaves us immediately to make a professional tour through Wales, prior to their visiting Germany for the winter.  

1842 August 12th Distin performance in Borough Court, Monmouth. The Distin quintet with Miss Hincks (voice) and Mrs. Distin on the piano.  

1842 August 29th Distin performance in Ross on Wye. The quintet with Miss Louisa Patten (voice) from the Bath concerts.  

The Distin family gave a charming concert here on Thursday last, which was well patronized. The performance of these clever artists created a great sensation, particularly that of Mr. Distin pere, on the trumpet, which was heard with mingled astonishment and delight.  

127 The Derby Mercury, April 13th 1842.  
128 The Musical World, April 21st 1842.  
129 Ibid., July 7th 1842 p. 213.  
130 Ibid., July 21st 1842.  
131 Ibid., August 1842 p.262.  
132 Ibid., September 1st 1842 p. 279.
August 30th Distin performance in Monmouth. The quintet with Miss Louisa Patten (voice) from the Bath concerts and Mrs. Distin on the piano.

The final concert of the silver band, whose performances have delighted the inhabitants of this city and its environs during the last fortnight, took place on Friday, and proved extremely satisfactory to all parties - both the artists and their auditors. The selections consisted of a number of sacred pieces, from the works of Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Kent, &c. most surprisingly executed by Mr Distin and sons, who seem to have established a new era in wind instrument playing, by taming down their powerful clangour to easy endurance, and even to fascination, in a room. Mrs Distin accompanied on the pianoforte with great care and efficiency. 133

September. Distin performance in Scotland

Her Majesty’s Visit to Scotland.
The interior of Taymouth Castle is at this moment the first in point of splendour on either side of the Tweed, and perhaps the first in Europe.
That nothing may be wanting to render the visit of her majesty as pleasant as possible, the celebrated Distin Family, with their musical instruments, will, it is understood, be in attendance during the Queen’s stay at Taymouth. 134

September 12th Distin performance in Brecon. 135

Two very charming concerts were given here last Wednesday and Friday, by those extraordinary wind instrumentalists, Mr. Distin and sons, aided by the vocal abilities of Miss Louisa Patton, and the pianoforte accompaniment of Mrs. Distin. Of all the perambulent minstrels who bring sweet harmonies into provincial recesses, these are surely the most perfect and unique - they are of themselves a full orchestre (sic). And richly do they merit the general applause and patronage which they receive. 136

September 24th Distin performance in Aberystwyth.

The Distin Family gave a very delightful concert here on Thursday, which attracted a numerous and fashionable audience. The performers of these fine horns and trumpet players excited the mingled surprise and admiration of all present. There were no less than seven encores in the course of the performance. Mrs Distin accompanied on the pianoforte with great care and ability. 137

October 11th Distin performance in Caernarvon.

The Distin Family have experienced the most flattering reception here, and in all the neighbouring towns and locations; proving that musical talent is sure of a just appreciation in this somewhat unfrequented region. They gave their last concert on 10th inst. Which was attended by all the principal inhabitants, and highly applauded. These eminent performers leave us for Dublin, where they will perform next week. 138

October 18th Distin performance in Waterford, Carrick, Clonmel, Cork. The Distins with Miss Smith (voice) and Mrs. Distin on the piano.

133 The Musical World, September 1st 1842.
134 The Era, September 4th 1842.
135 The Musical World, September 15th 1842.
136 Ibid., September 15th 1842.
137 Ibid., September 29th 1842.
138 Ibid., October 20th 1842.
On this occasion Mr. Distin introduced a new instrument called "Tenor Cor" "partaking some of the combined nature of trumpet and French Horn, on which he played several airs with great skill and perfection.\textsuperscript{139}

**1842** October 22\textsuperscript{nd} Distin performance in Dublin.

Our music hall was densely crowded on Wednesday evening, and the audience had reason for self-congratulation, for rarely has so charming and perfect a performance taken place in this city. The Distin family, with their silver instruments, and silvery tones, executed a variety of solos, duets, quartets, and quintets, with a finish and one-feeling which enraptured every ear, and found its way to every heart. Mrs. Distin presided at a very so-so pianoforte with more than adequate success.\textsuperscript{140}

**1842** November 21\textsuperscript{st} Distin performances in Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny

The Distin family gave a charming performance here last night, which was very fully attended and gave great satisfaction. The performed at Carlow on Monday and Kilkenny on Wednesday, with equal success- the local papers are enthusiastic in their commendation of this talented musical party.\textsuperscript{141}

**1842** December. Distin performances in Cork, Carrick, Clonmel

The Distin family, who have given concerts during the last few weeks at Waterford, Carrick, Clonmel, with very distinguished success, performed at our theatre last Tuesday and following evenings; their attraction was very great, for a splendid reputation had preceded them; and it is only just to say, that their extraordinary and very superior performances realized, if not exceeded, all that our excited expectations had anticipated.\textsuperscript{142}

**1842** Announcement\textsuperscript{143} Distin performance in Germany

The Distins will be visiting Germany for the winter.\textsuperscript{144}

**1843** January, Distin performances in Ireland: Limerick, Negah (Nenagh) and Parsonstown (now called Birr) ‘which netted upwards of £60 for charity’.

**1843** February 20\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Parsonstown

The Distin family have given a succession of very attractive and profitable concerts in this vicinity:- five at Limerick, one at the Franciscan church (for a charity) which netted upwards of sixty pounds, two at Nenagh, last week, which attracted all the principal families of the vicinity; and they announce two here, for Wednesday and Thursday next. The beautiful tone, steadiness, expression, and ensemble of these extraordinary performers, have enchanted all auditors, and induced a mingled admiration and surprise at the amazing perfection they have obtained on their not very tractable instruments.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{139} *The Musical World*, December 1842 p.410.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., October 27\textsuperscript{th} 1842.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., November 24\textsuperscript{th} 1842.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., December 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1842.
\textsuperscript{143} This announcement is probably inaccurate, as the group still performing in Ireland in February 1843.
\textsuperscript{144} *The Musical World* July 21\textsuperscript{st} 1842.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., March 9\textsuperscript{th} 1843.
1843  February 25th. Distin performance in Music Hall, Abbey Street, Dublin, Mr. Mackintosh benefit. The Distin family with Miss Louisa Patton (voice), Misses A. and M. Williams (voice), Mr. Williams (voice) and Mr. F. W. Horncastle.  

1843  March 10th Distin performance in Drogheda.

Last evening, the celebrated musical family, the Distins, gave a most delightful concert to a highly fashionable audience. The instruments used, were the trumpet, bugle, tenor corno, trombone, and French horns; and never was more perfect harmony than that produced by the beautiful combination of these instruments. Dr. Arne’s “Soldier Tired”, was given on the trumpet by Mr Distin Sen., in the most delightful style—every cadence and triplet was played with as much sweetness and accuracy, as if the flute, in the hands of a most perfect performer, was the instrument used. The trumpet obligato by Mr. Distin sen., also to “Let the Bright seraphim’ was a most masterly performance—echoing and rivalling in sweetness and effect, the excellent voice of the singer. The Hunting Duet’. By Messrs. H. and W. Distin, was a most unique performance; the rich mellow tone of the two French horns used, were echoed back upon the same instruments, as if the reverberation came from some distant valley, or over some forest-girded lake. The “Hymn from Massaniello’ Quartetto, by the brothers, was most exquisite, as was also the solo on the French horn, by Mr H. Distin. In the finale of “God Save the Queen’ the trombone was superb—the syncopated passages had a most striking effect. Several charming songs were sung by Miss Spence, of the Royal Academy of Music. Mrs Distin presided at the piano, with most excellent taste.  

It is possible that the reporter was in error when he states that the ‘bugle’ was used, as Henry, by this time had adopted the cornét a-piston.

1843  Mr Henry Distin “will perform on the newly invented instrument, the Tenor Corno”  

1843  April 6th & 7th Distin performance in Londonderry

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146  Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser. February 20th 1843.
147  The Musical World, March 23rd 1843 p.111.
148  Londonderry Standard, April 5th 1843.
CORPORATION-HALL, LONDONDERHY.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY EVENINGS,
APRIL 6 AND 7 1843.

GREAT MUSICAL ATTRACTION!!!

FIRST VISIT TO LONDONDERHY OF
THE DISTINS!
THE CELEBRATED SILVER QUINTETTE BAND!

The Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Officers of the Garrison, and
Inhabitants, are respectfully informed, that arrangements are
made for

Two Grand Evening Concerts,
which will take place as above, by those unrivalled Artists, whose
performances are the theme of universal admiration, and were
honoured with the patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen
Victoria, at Sixty successive Concerts in White's Rooms, London,
and who were received at the Theatres Royal, Drury-lane, and
Cavendish Garden, Queen's Concert Rooms, and every Town they
have visited, with enthusiastic applause,

MR. DISTIN
Nine years Principal Trumpet in the private Band of His Majesty
King George the Fourth, universally acknowledged to be the
First Trumpet Player in Europe! Will introduce his
celebrated solo, the whole of the Voice part of "The Soldier
Ired," as performed by him only; and with his Four Sons,
selections of their inimitable Quintettes, Quartettes, &c., &c.,
from the most popular operas of the day, arranged expressly for
their novel and beautiful combination of Silver Instru-
ments.

MR. H. DISTIN
Will perform Solos on the French Horn, and on the newly-invented
Instrument, the Tenor Corno.

MESSRS. H. & W. DISTIN
Will introduce their much admired Echo Hunting Duet upon two
French Horns, producing the most novel effects.

MISS SPENCER,
(OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC, LONDON, Pupil of Signor Negri)
Will sing a Selection of Bravuras, Cavatines, Ballada, &c., &c.

Mrs. Distin will preside at the Pianoforte.

Doors to open at half past Seven, performances to commence
at Eight o'clock. Single Tickets, 3s. 6d.; Family Tickets, to
about Five, 15s.; Children and Schools, Half Price; Second
Seats, 2s.; Gallery, 1s.—Tickets to be had of Mrs. Campbell,
and at the Rooms.

For a New Selection of Music on the second Evening, for
which Programmes may be had of Mrs. Campbell.

Carriages to be in attendance at Half-past Ten.
Concerts of the Distin Family.

These celebrated performers have given three concerts in our city, which were attended by crowded and fashionable audiences. We feel the more gratified at their success, as the performance, on the whole, surpassed our most sanguine expectations. Among the pieces that struck us as particularly beautiful was the obligato accompaniment on the trumpet by Mr. Distin, to Handel’s ‘Let the Bright Seraphim,’ and Mr. H. Distin’s solo on the Tenor Corno of ‘All is lost now,’ from Bellini’s Somnambula, in both of which the instruments imitated, in an exquisite manner, the softness of a sweet tenor voice. The extraordinary precision and good taste of the Messrs. Distin in their quintets shone most conspicuously in the performance of ‘Vivi Tu’ from Anna Bolena, which imparted, in our estimation, a greater charm to Donizetti’s music than it is generally thought to possess.

Finally, we must acknowledge our obligation to Mrs. Distin for the able and tasteful manner in which she accompanied, on the pianoforte, the other performances.

1843 April 6th Distin performance in Londonderry

These excellent musicians will give their first concert tomorrow evening in the Corporation Hall, for particulars of which see advertisement. That the entertainment will be of the highest order we have no doubt, both from the long-earned fame of the performers, and the éclat with which they have been just received in Newry. We take the following critique of their concert in Newry from our respected contemporary The Telegraph:- This celebrated family of highly talented musicians gave a concert in our Assembly Rooms, on Thursday evening, and another on yesterday evening. The audience was highly respectable. The performance was, in every respect, such as fully came up to the highest expectations of the delighted assembly, whom the celebrity of Mr. Distin, sen., had led to hope for an unusually delightful entertainment. All the pieces in which he took part were performed by ‘the first trumpet-player in Europe,’ (as Mr. Distin is deservedly called,) in a very brilliant manner, and with exquisite taste. His four sons played the French horn, the cornopean etc, with a feeling, power, and precision which those only who have heard them can duly appreciate. In every instance, they were loudly applauded; and Mr. H. Distin’s solo from La Somnambula was rapturously and deservedly encored. Mrs. Distin presided at the Piano-Forte; and in the accompaniments she exhibited much taste and judgement.

1843 April 10th Distin performance in Londonderry Corporation Hall

The most marvellous efforts of art imaginable...being the farewell performance.

The musical folk of this city have been charmed by the performance of these celebrated artistes at their evening concerts recently given by them in the Corporation Hall. On each occasion the room was crowded to the full by a fashionable audience. This company of musicians consists of the Messrs. Distin, the father and his four sons, players on brass instruments – Mrs. Distin, who accompanies on the piano-forte and Miss Spence, a vocalist. The pieces were selected from the most classical authors, Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti etc. The elder Mr. Distin’s instrument is the trumpet, which he manages with great skill, producing a perfectly true, clear, and brilliant tone, analogous to the higher notes of the female voice. His execution of ‘The Soldier Tired,’ and other bravuras, involving immense rapidity of finger, was such as one could hardly believe possible. Two other members of the family have adopted the French horn, and the others a cornet-a-piston and trombone, all of which instruments were most scientifically performed upon. The general effect, especially in the piano pieces, is that of a full mellow organ, with a certain wailing plaintiveness which ravishes the ear. The forte passages are not so pleasing in a room. With the exception of a few echo effects – very tempting for performers on such instruments – there is no trickery in their music. It was on the whole a treat to persons whose taste is formed for the higher order of harmony.

149 Londonderry Journal, April 4th 1843.
150 Ibid., April 5th 1843.
Mrs Distin’s piano-forte accompaniment was beyond all praise; nothing could be more easy and graceful than her adaptation of the part allotted to her, to the wind instruments. We understand that these deservedly popular performers will give a morning concert today Nu-Limavady at two o’clock and we have no doubt of their drawing a large audience.  

Londonderry Corporation Hall

1843 April 12th. Distin performance in Corporation Hall, Londonderry. The Distin family and Miss Spence (voice).  

1843 April. Distin performance in Londonderry

A charming concert was given here on Monday, being the farewell performance of the celebrated Distin family, who have afforded very great entertainment to the inhabitants for this vicinity during the past 10 days. On this occasion, the Corporation Hall was crowded with all the beauty, talent, and distinction within a dozen miles of the town; and the selection, being principally of sacred works, excited the utmost interest and satisfaction. The concerted pieces, executed by these extraordinary artistes upon their silver instruments, are the most marvellous efforts of art imaginable, and produce a sensation fully equal to the most perfect vocal delivery. The solos are no less happy and pleasing and the superior style of singing of Miss Spence, late of the Royal Academy of Music, is most creditable to herself and to the institution. Her ‘Let the bright Seraphim,’ with the trumpet-obligato of Mr. Distin the elder, is one of the most pleasing performances ever heard here. Mrs. Distin accompanies on the pianoforte with ease and taste.  

1843 April 17th. Distin performance for the Anacreontic Society, Belfast (the third concert). The Distin family, Miss Spence (voice), and Mr. Dyke (flute).  

1843 April 26th. Distin performance in Belfast. The Distin family and Miss Spence (voice).  

1843 April 28th. A poster advertising a concert in Theatre Royal, Arthur Street, Belfast.  

151 The Musical World, April 20th 1843.  
152 Londonderry Standard, April 12th 1843.  
154 Ibid., April 20th 1843.  
155 The Belfast Newsletter, April 21st 1843.  
156 Ibid., April 25th 1843.  
157 See poster and also note the clash of dates concerning their next performance which are advertised as being in Belfast and Bath on the same day.
Musical Talent Unparalleled!

WONDERFUL PERFORMANCES ON THE SILVER TUBES OF MELODY.

POSITIVELY THE LAST NIGHT.

Friday Next, 28th April, 1843,

Under the Immediate Patronage of

GEORGE DUNBAR, ESQ., MAYOR,

COL. H.S. PHILIPS,

AND THE

OFFICERS of the 53rd REGIMENT,

Who have, in the kindest manner, signified their intention of being present, upon which occasion

THE BAND OF THAT CALLANT CORPS

Will attend, and for the First Time in Bristol, perform several Overtures, Waltzes, Quadrilles, &c., under the direction of

SIGNOR DE ANGELIS.

BEING FOR THE

BENEFIT

of the DISTINS

(And their last appearance in the Country,) on which occasion the Entire of the

TEACHER WILL PERFORM

(I) HIS FOUR SONS

New Selections of their most Popular Quintettes, Quartettes, &c.

The decease of their Father, the late Mr. Distin, has filled the Band, with the most profound silence, henceforth, the Band will be conducted by his most devoted son.

MR. DISTIN, THE IMITATIVE TRUMPET-PLAYER,

Will introduce an encore, viz.:—

"Spirits of My Nellie Marie,"—and will

MR. H. DISTIN

will perform Solfes at the Censer and Distin's Walking-stick Corsettes.

MISS SPENCE,

whose musical talents have been conspicuous throughout the British and foreign world;

MRS. DISTIN will preside at the PIANO-FORTE.


**Programme**

Overture: Military Band (53rd Regiment) Conductor: Signor de Angelis

Distin Quintette: Io L’udia Donizetti

Cavatina: Miss Spence

Solo on Tenor Cor by Henry Distin – Bellini

Waltzes: Military Band

Echo Hunting Duet by Distin (Henry & William Distin)

Song: Let the Bright Seraphim – Handel (Miss Spence & John Distin)

Quartette: (Prize Glee) Harmony (The Distin Brothers)

Quadrilles: Military Band

**Interval**

Overture: Military Band

Trumpet Fantasia: Spirit of My Sainted Sire – Storage (John Distin)

Vocal Duet: The Singing Lesson – Barnett (Miss Spence & Theodore Distin)

Solo on the Walking Stick Cornetto – Balfe (Henry Distin)

Waltzes: Military Band

Cavatina: Miss Spence

Distin Quintette from a popular opera

Buffo Glee: Vadasi via di qua – Martini (The Distins)

God Save the Queen – Military Band

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1843 April 27th & 28th Distin performance in Bath. Concerts in Bath Assembly Room.

Mr. Distin’s solos on the French horn and tenor cornet, were well executed. 158

1843 May 4th Distin performance in Bath

The Distin Family. – This family has paid our town a visit during the present week. They have given two Concerts in the Assembly Room; one on Thursday evening, and one yesterday morning. On both occasions they were fairly supported. The morning concert was attended by all the rank and fashion of the town and neighbourhood. The artistes were received with admiration, and their exertions frequently applauded. Mr. Distin displayed both skill and judgement in his management of the trumpet. Mr. H. Distin’s solos on the French horn, and tenor corno, were well executed. The quartets and quintets were performed with good effect. Mr.(?) Distin’s accompaniments on the pianoforte were much admired. The Distins have left, we understand, for Belfast, where they have an engagement for three days next week. 159

1843 May 10th Distin performance in Glasgow

The Distin family gave a concert in the Trade’s Hall on Wednesday evening. Nothing could exceed the combined effect produced by the five instruments – vis, Two French horns, a trombone, and two cornets-a-piston – in the various concerted pieces, particularly the quintet from Balfe’s “Siege of Rochelle.’ Of the solos during the evening, that which called forth the most rapturous encore was the fantasia on the “Soldier Tired,’ executed in masterly style on the trumpet by Mr. Distin sen. We would also notice, in terms of praise, the manner in which Mr. H. Distin gave the scena from “La Sonnambula.’ The Messrs. Distin sang the laughing glee, “Vadasi via di Qua,’ which called forth a hearty encore. The “Queen’s Anthem,’ executed by the entire strength of the brass instruments, terminated the entertainments, which afforded gratification to a numerous and respectable audience. 160

1833 May 15th 16th & 27th Distin performance at the Waterloo Rooms, Regent Bridge, Musard Concert. The Distin family and Miss Spence (voice). 161

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159 Ibid., May 4th 1843.

160 Ibid., May 11th 1843.

161 *The Scotsman*, May 13th and May 27th 1843.
1843 May 15th & 16th Distin performance in Edinburgh. Poster for concerts given in the style of Musard.  

"The Celebrated Silver QUINTETTE BAND, riz., MR DISTIN."

THE DISTIN FAMILY AND MISS SPENCE

AT

NEXT MUSARD CONCERT;
Monday Evening, 15th May 1843.
The Directors respectfully intimate that they have
succeeded in engaging,
FOR TWO NIGHTS ONLY,
The Celebrated Silver QUINTETTE BAND, riz.,
MR DISTIN,
(Nine Years Principal Trumpet in the
Private Band of George IV.)
HIS FOUR SONS; as also
MISS SPENCE, of the Royal Academy of Music.

PART FIRST.
Overture, "Yolza," - - - Reisiger.
Quintette, "Quando di sangue tinto," (Delisario), The Distins, - - Donizetti.
Recitative & Aria, "Io Ludi" (Tosco), Miss Spence, - - Donizetti.
Aria, French Horn, "Mezzo tu rivi" (La Strinsierra), Mr. H. Distin, - - - Bellini.
Song, "Let the bright Seraphim," Miss Spence, Trumpet Obligato, Mr Distin, - - - Handel.
Quartetto, "Vivi Tu," (Anna Bolena), The Brothers Distin, - - Donizetti.

PART SECOND.
Overture, "Le Lac des Fées," (by de- sica, - - - Auber.
Fantasia, Trumpet, Mr Distin, his much-admired Solo, "The Soldier tired," - - - Dr. Arne.
Irish Ballad, "Dermot astore," Miss Spence, - - - Crouch.
Solo, Tenor Corno, "Tutto o Scolto," (La Sonnambula), Mr. H. Distin, Bellini.
Quintette, "The feeling heart," (Siege of Rochelle), The Distins, - - - Balle.
Buffo Glee, "Yadani vi di qua," to be sung by the Distins, - - Martini.
Finale, "God save the Queen," ar- ranged and to be performed by the Distins.
MRS DISTIN will preside at the Pianoforte.

TICKETS, One Shilling each—for RESERVED SEATS
in the Orchestra, Two Shillings—to be had at the
Music Warehouses.
Doors open at Seven; Concert to commence at a
Quarter-past Eight o'clock.

1843 May 31st. Distin performance in Edinburgh in the style of Musard.

162 The Scotsman, May 13th 1843.
CONCERT A LA MUSARD,
WATERLOO ROOMS, REGENT BRIDGE;
WEDNESDAY.

THE DISTIN FAMILY
respectfully intimate that their
BENEFIT CONCERT
will take place:
THIS EVENING, Wednesday 31st May 1843,
(Positively their Last Appearance but One),
when, in addition to the
SILVER QUINTETTE BAND,
AND
MISS SPENCE, of the Royal Academy of Music,
MISS FITZPATRICK
will also appear.

PART FIRST
Quintette, “Ah che Forse” (Zelmira) - Rossini.
Cavatina, “Stanza di piu,” Miss Spence, Marliani.
Solo, French Horn, Mr. H. Distin.
Duet, “Mira O Norma,” Miss Spence
and Miss Fitzpatrick, - Bellini.
Air, Trumpet, “Oh no, we never mention her,” Mr. Distin,
Song, “The deep deep sea,” Miss Spence, Horn.
Quintette, The admired Hymn from
Musiciello, The Brothers Distin, Aubry.

PART SECOND.
Fantasia, Trumpet, Mr. Distin, in which
he will introduce his admired Solo,
“Spirit of myainted sire,” (from the
Haunted Tower) as performed by
him only!! - - - - - - Stories.
Ballad, “Dermot and Othe,” Miss Spence, Crouch.
Quintette, “La Luna, il Sol, la Stelle,”
(L. Patti), The Distins, - Bellini.
Song, “Annie Laurie,” Miss Fitzpatricke
- - - - Lady John Scott.
Solo, Tenor Corno, Mr. H. Distin,
Donizetti.
Ballad, Miss Spence.
Quintette, from a favourite Opera, The Distins.
Finale, “God Save the Queen,” arranged and to be
performed by The Distins.

MRS. DISTIN will preside at the GRAND PIANOFORTE
made by Joseph Kirkman & Sons, London.

Tickets, One Shilling each—for RESERVED SEATS
in the Orchestra, Two Shillings—to be had at the
Music Warehouses.
Doors open at Seven; Concert to commence at a
quarter-past Eight o’clock.

Concert A La Musard, Waterloo Rooms, Regent Bridge. 163
The Distin Family respectfully intimate that their BENEFIT CONCERT will take place this
evening, Wednesday 231st May 1843. (Positively their Last Appearance but one)
when, in addition to the
SILVER QUINTETTE BAND, AND Miss SPENCE, of the Royal Academy of Music,
will also appear.

PART FIRST
Quintette, Ah che Forse (Zelmira) - Rossini
Cavatina, Stanza di piu Miss Spence, - Marliani

163 The Scotsman, May 31st 1843.

Ray Farr 37
Solo French Horn, Mr Henry Distin
Duet, Mira O Norma  Miss Spence & Miss Fitzpatrick –Bellini
Air, Trumpet Oh no, We never Mention Her Mr Distin –Sir H. R. Bishop
Song, The Deep Sea Miss Spence –Horn
Quartet, Hymn from Masaniello –Distins –Auber

PART SECOND
Fantasia Trumpet, Mr DISTIN, in which he will introduce his admired Solo, Spirit of my sainted sire (from Haunted Tower) as performed by him only!!
Ballad, Dermot, asthore Miss Spence –Crouch
Quintette, La Luna, il Sol, le Stelle (I Puritana) The Distins – Bellini
Song, Annie Laurie Miss Fitzpatrick – Lady John Scott
Solo, Tenor Corno, Mr H. Distin – Donizetti
Ballad, Miss Spence
Quintette, from a favourite Opera, The Distins
Finale, God Save the Queen arranged and to be performed by The DISTINS.
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Mrs. Distin will preside at the Grand Pianoforte
Appendix A

CONCERT A LA MUSARD,
WATERLOO ROOMS, REGENT BRIDGE; WEDNESDAY.

THE DISTIN FAMILY
respectfully intimate that their:
BENEFIT CONCERT
will take place:
THIS EVENING, Wednesday 31st May 1843,
(Possibly their Last Appearance but One),
when, in addition to the
SILVER QUINTETTE BAND,
AND
MISS SPENCE, of the Royal Academy of Music,
MISS FITZPATRICK
will also appear.

PART FIRST.
Quintette, “Ah che forse” (Zanetti), Miss Spence, Vacaj, Solo Tenor Corno Henry
Duet, “Mira o Norma,” Miss Spence and Miss Fitzpatrick, Air, Miss Spence and Miss Fitzpatrick, Bellini.
Air Trumpet, “Oh no, we never mention her,” Sir H. R. Bishop, Bellini.
Song, “The deep deep sea,” Miss Spence, Horn.
Quartette, The admired Hymn from Masaniello, The Brothers Distin, Aubert.

PART SECOND.
Fantasia, Trumpet, Mr. Distin, in which he will introduce his admired Solo,
“Spirit of my saided sire,” (from the Haunted Tower) as performed by him only.
Ballad, “Der battaglia,” Miss Spence, Crouch.
Quintette, “La Luna, il Sol, la Stella,” (I Puritani), The Distins, Bellini.
Song, “Anne Laurie,” Miss Fitzpatrick, Lady John Scott.
Solo, Tenor Corso, Mr. H. Distin, Donizetti.
Ballad, Miss Spence.
Quartette, from a favourite Opera, The Distins.
Finale, “God Save the Queen,” arranged and to be performed by The Distins.

MISS DISTIN will preside at the GRAND PIANOFORTE
(made by Joseph Kirkman & Sons, London).

TICKETS, One Shilling each—for RESERVED SEATS
in the Orchestra, Two Shillings—to be had at the Music Warehouses.
Doors open at Seven; Concert to commence at a quarter past Eight o'clock.

1843 June 5th Distin performance in the Waterloo Rooms, Regent Bridge, Musard Concert.

Part first: Grand Symphony, Mozart, Quintette (first time of performance) “Alfin son tua” from Lucia di Lamermoor, Bellini, Cavatina Va le Recen Miss Spence, Vacaj, Solo Tenor Corno H. Distin, Duet “Mira o Norma” (by desire) Miss Spence and Miss Fitzpatrick, Bellini, Quadrille Les Troubadours, Musard, Echo Hunting Duet two French Horns Henry and William (by desire), Air trumpet Henry, Ballad Dermondy Miss Spence, Crouch, Quartette Harmony the brothers Distin, Beale. Part second: National Irish Overture, Sir H. R. Bishop, Fantasia for trumpet with full orchestral accompaniment, Song Bonny Prince Charlie Miss Spence, Solo on Distin's walking stick cornetto, Balfe, Waltzer Aurora, Labitzky, song The Pearly Deep Miss Fitzpatrick, Nelson,
Quintette (first time of performance) “Tu non sai la nave” *Marino Faliero*, Donizetti, song *Bid me discourse* Miss Spence, Sir H. R. Bishop, Finale *God save the Queen*.164

1843 June 10th 165 Distin performance in Dundee Thistle Hall.

‘It is now several years since the Family visited Dundee’.

1843 June 15th Distin performance in Perth, Scotland. The Distin family and Miss Spence (voice).

The Distin Family gave a concert in the theatre in the above city, which was fully and fashionably attended. Miss Spence was encored in several songs. The Distins are about to proceed to Germany. 166

1843 June 10th Distin performance in Dundee, Scotland

The Distins in the Thistle Hall on Friday evening. It is now several years since this Family visited Dundee, and the remembrance of their former performances drew together a very numerous and respectable audience.167

1843 June 28th & July 1st Distin performance in Arbroath.

The Distins made their appearance at our Theatre on Wednesday evening and attracted a larger audience than that of Monday. Miss Spence favoured us with several songs in the course of the evening. Mrs. Distin presided at the piano.168

1843 August. Distin performance in Durham169

Theatre Durham - Mr. Stimpson respectfully announce to the Clergy, Nobility, and Gentry, and the Public in general of Durham and its Vicinity, that he will give a Grand Evening Concert, of Vocal and Instrumental Music on Thursday August 31st for which occasion he has engaged the celebrated DISTIN FAMILY, The unrivalled Silver Quintette and Quartette performers; Miss Spence of the Royal Academy of Music, Pupil of Signor Negri, and Mr. Ashton, Pupil of Sir George Smart. Doors open at seven and the concert will commence at eight o’clock precisely. Boxes, 3s. Pit, 2s. Gallery, 1s.

1843 August 4th. Distin performance in Kelso (in the Scottish Boarders) at the Cross-keys Hotel.

The Distin family have given a performance at the Cross-Keys Hotel, in this town. Mr. H. Distin showed power in the performance of solos upon the tenor corno, and Mrs. Distin presided at the pianoforte. Mr. Distin was more than himself on the occasion.170

1843 August. Distin performance in Musical Hall, Newcastle.171

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164 *The Scotsman*, June 3rd 1843.
165 *The Musical World*, June 22nd 1843.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid., July 13th 1843.
169 *The Durham Advertiser*, Friday 18th & Friday 25th August 1843.
1843  August 24th Distin performance in Glasgow

These popular Saturday evening concerts were lately concluded for the season with the Distin Family, Miss Spence, Mr. Locks and the band of the 24th Regiment. Throughout, the attendance has been large and most respectable, embracing the most fashionable circles in the city, and the professional parties employed have been the best that could be obtained. A strong prejudice existed till lately in the profession, against the price of admission, but fortunately for the public, the directors have overcome this in a great measure, as their concerts have fully demonstrated that a fashionable audience and liberal remuneration can be secured without resorting to exclusive prices. These concerts – the best and most successful entertainments of the kind now got up in Glasgow – have already produced a marked improvement in the musical taste of the public, and if the directors succeed in their efforts to produce first rate talent during next season, this taste for good music may be cultivated to a much greater extent, and a most remunerative field be opened in Glasgow for professional parties of real ability.\textsuperscript{172}

1843  August 19th Distin performance in Glasgow.\textsuperscript{173} Performance at the Teetotal Concert in Glasgow City Hall. (Supported by the band of the 24th Regiment).

1843  August 25th Distin performance in the Music Hall, Newcastle, Grand farewell promenade concert.\textsuperscript{174}

1843  August 28th Distin performance in the Theatre, Newcastle.\textsuperscript{175}

1843  August 29th and September 1st Distin performance in Sunderland Theatre. The Distin quintet with Miss Spence.

The Distin Family – Mr. Distin, for several years in the private band of His Majesty George IV., and his four sons. Gave a concert in the Theatre of this town on Tuesday evening. The house was ‘a bumper,’ and the interest of the company was kept at its utmost tension throughout the performances. The first part opened with a quintett, followed by a cavatina sung by Miss Spence, and an air on the French horn by Mr. H. Distin. The next piece was ‘Let the bright Seraphim,’ with the trumpet obligato by the elder Distin. It was sung by Miss Spence. We cannot afford space to particularize further. The party have announced another concert for Monday evening.\textsuperscript{176}

1843  September. Distin performances in Durham, Harrogate, Hull.\textsuperscript{177}

1843  September Halifax. Distin performance in the Odd Fellows’ Hall.

‘The Distins.’ - On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights, the Distins have been giving Concerts in the large room of the Odd Fellows’ Hall in this town. The party is accompanied by Miss Spence, of the Royal Academy of Music, a clever and useful vocalist.\textsuperscript{178, 179}

1843  September 30th Distin performance in a Grand morning concert, Leeds.\textsuperscript{180} The Distin family among other artists.

\textsuperscript{172} The Musical World, August 24\textsuperscript{th} 1843.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{174} The Newcastle Courant, August 25\textsuperscript{th} 1843.
\textsuperscript{175} The Musical World, August 1843 p.296.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., September 7\textsuperscript{th} 1843.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., August 1843 p.296.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., October 4\textsuperscript{th} 1843.
\textsuperscript{179} Halifax Guardian, September 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1843.
\textsuperscript{180} The Leeds Mercury, September 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1843.
1843 October 8th Berlioz endorses Sax instruments.\footnote{Journal de Débats August 1843-January 1844.}
During the spring of 1843 Hector Berlioz was travelling in Germany and he wrote an article ‘Voyage Musical en Allemagne’ which appeared in a series of eleven articles in the Journal de Débats (August 1843--January 1844). The composer’s strong opinions carried a great deal of authority.

As a matter of fact, in France, we are not lacking in instruments with cylinders; Adolphe Sax is at present constructing large and small trumpets with cylinders, in every possible tonality, the average as well as the unusual ones, and their sonority and perfection are beyond reproach. It is really unbelievable that this young and gifted artist should meet with such hardships in his efforts to gain recognition and to find his place in Paris. He is persecuted in a way that would seem to belong to the dark ages, recalling to mind the proceedings employed by the enemies of Benvenuto (Cellini), the florentine carver. His workmen are enticed away from him, his plans are stolen, he is accused of being insane, and lawsuits are set up against him. A little more and he would be murdered. Such is the hatred stirred against real inventors by their competitors, incapable of inventing anything. Luckily for him, the skilled inventor has been constantly honoured by the protection and friendship of General de Rumigny. This has enabled him up to now to resist in the desperate struggle. But will it always suffice? ... The War Minister should give a man so useful in his rare specialty a position worthy of his talent, his tenacity, and his efforts.

1843 October 1843. Distin performance in Leeds.\footnote{The Leeds Mercury, October 28th 1843.}

1843 October. Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Preston.

The Distin quintet with Miss Spence (voice). \textit{The last rose of Summer} (J. Distin on the trumpet), \textit{The light of other days} (Henry on the walking stick cornetto), \textit{Echo hunting duet} and others.\footnote{Preston Chronicle, November 4th 1843.}

1843 October 14\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance at the Athenaeum.

We attended the first concert of this musical family, last evening, at the Athenaeum. The performers are the father and four sons, with Mrs Distin at the piano. Their instruments are the keyed trumpet, cornets-a-pistons, tenor corno, French horns, and bass horn or trombone. With these instruments, in different combinations, the Distins produce various striking and pleasing harmonies from instruments which rarely heard played with the same amount of ability. The echo hunting duet, in which the effect of a distinct echo is produced by two French horns, the performers even giving a very perfect shake, was a remarkable performance. Mr Distin’s trumpet fantasia was also a wonderful performance for an instrument proverbially uncertain in some of it’s notes; but all was clear and firm, and the execution very brilliant. A solo on the cornet-a-piston, by Mr. H. Distin, the air, "All is lost now," from La Somnambula, was a very finished piece, and was much applauded. The quintette giving Mendelssohn’s chorus from St. Paul, "Sleepers Awake," was very fine, the cornets-a-piston combining, better, in our opinion, with the trumpet and bass-horn than do the French horns. – The Finale was the national Anthem, in which Mr. Distin’s trumpet and the bass-horn were distinguished.\footnote{The Observer October 14\textsuperscript{th} 1843.}
November 1st, 3rd, 6th & 7th Distin performance in Leeds. The Distin family, Miss Spence (voice), Messrs. Lindley, Blagrove, Williams, and Misses Williams.¹⁸⁵

November. Distin performance in Manchester. The Distin quintet with Miss Spence (voice).¹⁸⁶

November 14th Distin performance in the Athenaeum Rooms, Derby.

Part I: Donizetti's quintet "Tu non sai" from *Marino Faliero* (Distins), Marliani's cavatina "Stanca di pin" (Miss Spence), solo on the French horn (Henry), Handel's *Let the bright Seraphim* (Miss Spence, and trumpet obligato by Mr. Distin), Crouch's ballad *Kathleen Mavourneen* (Miss Spence), Beale's quartet *Harmony* (brothers Distin). Part II: "Fantasia" on the trumpet (J. Distin), Vaccà's cavatina *Va le reca* (Miss Spence), Bellini's solo "Tutto e sciolto" from *La Sonnambula* (Henry on the tenoro corno), Davies' ballad *Ruth* (Miss Spence), grand concerted piece "Donala a questo core" from Bellini's *Rebecca da Zoraide* (the Distins), Crouch's ballad *Dermot Asthore* (Miss Spence), *God save the Queen* (the Distins).¹⁸⁷

The celebrated Distin Family gave a morning concert at the Athenaeum room in this town yesterday to a highly respectable audience. It was a performance of very great ability, and drew down repeated and unanimous applause...

The perfect correctness and brilliant execution which marked each piece., masterly manner in which it was performed. The trumpet playing of Mr. Distin unquestionably belongs to the highest range of the art. The complete control which he possesses over that most intractable instrument, and the clear and thrilling tones which he draws from it, at once delight and astonish the hearer.¹⁸⁸

November 15th – 17th. Distin performance in the Lecture Hall, Derby, Grand promenade concerts. The Distin quintet with Miss Spence (voice).¹⁸⁹

November. Distin performances in Ashbourn and Nottingham.¹⁹⁰

December. The Distin Family brass ensemble travelled to Paris, France¹⁹¹ to fulfil an engagement at the Paris theatre, for one month, seven performances per week.¹⁹² Henry Distin gives some background information on the trip:

"The Distins were glad to get an engagement at the Paris theatre, for one month, seven performances per week, for 3,000fr., equivalent to about $25 per week each."¹⁹³

(Adam Carse maintains the group had been playing in Belgium before they came to Paris but he may be confused with the tour of 1846.)

Distins adopted the Saxhorn and played on them with enormous success at a concert given by Berlioz at the *Opéra Comique*.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁵ *The Leeds Mercury*, November 4th 1843.
¹⁸⁷ *The Derby Mercury*, November 15th 1843.
¹⁸⁸ Ibid.,
¹⁸⁹ Ibid.,
¹⁹⁰ Ibid.,
¹⁹¹ Ibid.,
¹⁹³ *The British Bandsman*, March 1889.
They played on saxhorns (soprano, contralto, alto, tenor & baritone), a fantasy on *Robert de Diable* specially made for them by the composer Meyerbeer.

Further reports on the occasion state:

The Distins had a real triumph when, on April 6th, they performed at the invitation of Hector Berlioz, at the Opera Comique on "Adolphe Sax's grand new invention' their bell-forward saxhorns (soprano Eb, contralto Bb, alto Eb, baritone, bass, and counter-bass), a fantasy on "Robert le Diable".195

Kochnitzky says the saxhorn family at that time was: soprano, alto, baritone, bass, and counter-bass. Scott and Kochnitzky claim that Berlioz conducted'.196197

1844 May 27th Distin performances in Paris
At the French Industrial Exhibition, the saxophone was shown for the first time. The exhibition was held in a temporary structure on the Champs-Élysées in Paris and the Distins were there to support Adolphe Sax and to demonstrate the saxhorns. King Louis-Philippe who was visiting the exhibition with his aide-de-camp, General de Rumigny, Queen Marie-Amelie and two of their sons, stopped to look at the Sax trade-stand. The Distins gave a little concert in honour of the royal visitors, who expressed their great satisfaction and invited the whole group to play at court.198 Carse states that the King was so delighted that he 'rewarded them with a gift of money'.199

1844 May. Distin performance in Paris
The Distin family, whose successful performances with the new instrument- of M. Saxe, at the concert of M. Berlioz, and several others, we have already recorded, had lately the honour to play before his Majesty, and several members of the royal family. His Majesty did the musicians the honour to compliment them graciously on the excellence of their performance. Mr. Distin sen., performed at the last grand concert at the Royal (Music) Conservatoire with immense applause, and the directors presented him with a silver medal, accompanied with a highly complimentary letter200.

195 English: Robert the Devil, an opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer which premiered in Paris in November 1831 and brought Meyerbeer international fame.
198 Ibid..
May. John Distin was invited to perform at the last grand concert at the Royal Music Conservatoire where, after immense applause, the directors presented him with a silver medal, accompanied with a highly complimentary letter.\textsuperscript{201}

Mr. Distin has received a very distinguished honour, having performed on the Trumpet, at the Conservatoire Royale de Musique, he was presented with a Silver Medal, accompanied with a highly complimentary letter. The Distin family have also received a handsome silver medal for their performances at the grand concert at the Hotel de Ville from the "Societe libre des Beaux arts' accompanied by a complimentary address-and recently they had the honour of performing, by special command, before their Majesties King Louis Philippe, the Queen, the Duc de Nemours, the Duc de Amaule, the Prince de Jouville, the Princess Adelaide, and many other distinguished persons. His majesty conversed very affably, in English, with the Distins, and complimented them highly on their performances. He has made them a handsome present in requital for the gratification afforded him. The instruments they now perform on, are of an entire new construction, called Saxhorns The Distins are now giving concerts in Germany with great success, and intend proceeding to Russia, returning to England at the commencement of next season.\textsuperscript{202}

The Distins were presented with four silver medals during their trip to France:

\textsuperscript{201} The Musical World, July 4th 1844.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., August 15th 1844.
Invariably receiving the most enthusiastic applause, Mr Distin was requested by M. Habeneck, the Director of the “Conservatoire Royale de Musique,” to perform some of Sebastian Bach’s and Handel’s compositions—(the former, in particular, having very difficult passages for trumpet)— which he did, and also the obligato to Handel’s “Let the Bright Seraphim”. – This composition had not been played in Paris for many years, as no French trumpet-player would attempt it.

Mr Distin’s reception was a most brilliant one, the audience and orchestra manifesting their delight by the most enthusiastic plaudits. The directors then presented him with a handsome silver medal accompanied with a very flattering letter and address (an honour unprecedented for an English artist in Paris). Mr Distin and his four sons were also presented with a splendid silver medal by the committee of the “Société libre des Beaux Arts”, with a very complimentary address, for their performance at their great concert at the Hotel de Ville.

The Distins are at present the only performers on the Sax Horn, which unites the powers of the French horn and those of the cornet á piston, but is infinitely superior to both for it combines the mellowness and sweetness of the former, with all the brilliancy and power of the later. The pieces which the Distins perform are of their own arrangement, and do credit to their musical skill.

Mr Distin and his four sons were also presented with a splendid silver medal by the committee of the “Société libre des Beaux Arts”, with a very complimentary address, for their performance at their great concert at the Hotel de Ville.

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204 Ibid.,
The Distins are at present the only performers on the Sax Horn, which unites the powers of the French horn and those of the cornet à piston, but is infinitely superior to both for it combines the mellowness and sweetness of the former, with all the brilliancy and power of the later. The pieces which the Distins perform are of their own arrangement, and do credit to their musical skill.\textsuperscript{205}

1844 June. Distin performance in Paris

THE DISTIN FAMILY. Whose successful performances with the new instrument- of M. Saxe, (sic) at the concert of M. Berlioz, and several others, we have already recorded, had lately the honour to play before his Majesty and several members of the royal family. His Majesty did the musicians the honour to compliment them graciously on the excellence of their performance. Mr. Distin, sen., performed at the last grand concert at the Royal Conservatoire with immense applause, and the directors presented him with a silver medal, accompanied with a highly complimentary letter.\textsuperscript{206}

1844 June. Sax invited the Distin family to go to Baden-Baden, Germany in order to promote the new saxhorn instruments and it seems that both Sax and the Distins did very well out of the collaboration, for the Distins went “from triumph to triumph”.\textsuperscript{207} They were there

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\textsuperscript{205} The Illustrated London News, December 14\textsuperscript{th} 1844 p.384.

\textsuperscript{206} The Musical World, July 4\textsuperscript{th} 1844.

\textsuperscript{207} Horwood, Wally, Adolphe Sax1814-1894 His life and Legacy (Herts.: Egon Pub. 1992).
for three months. The Grand Duke had them give private concerts at Carlsruhe, and supplied them with an autographed letter of recommendation to Queen Victoria.

1844 June 26th. Distins arrive in Baden-Baden and stay at Au Chevalier d’or (Ritter)  
Mr. Distin, London  
Mademoiselle Laura Distin, London  
Mr. G. J. Distin (sic), London  
Mr. Henry Distin, London  
Mr. William Distin, London  
Lady Louise Distin, London.

1844 July/August/September. Distin performances in Germany

1844 June 30th. Distin performance at the Grand salle de la Conversation, Baden-Baden.

1844 July 2nd. Concert review from Badeblatt

In the Grand Hall the night before yesterday, The Distin Family opened their series of performances on klappentrumpets, following their serenade in the lovely facilities of the Pavilion the night before. The memory of which triggered remarks, that the harsh tones of the brass instruments appeared more enjoyable outdoors rather than in a confined space, and even when compared to the nightingale, this artistic family will do well to devote themselves to more of the gay and lively rather than the smooth style.*

* Implied, the klapphorns and chromatic trumpets sound good where they belong. However, when the music requires soul and emotion, brass should stay away because they distort the tender and noble towards caricature. d. B.

209 The British Bandsman, March 1889.
210 Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 27th June 1844.
211 The Theatrical Observer and Daily Bills of the Play, September 2nd 1844 pp.703-704.
212 Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 27th June 1844.
213 Ibid.,
Appendix A

1844  July 7th. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

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**Maison de Conversation.**

Aujourd’hui Dimanche, 7 Juillet,
A 8 heures et demie du soir,

**MUSIQUE**

Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

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**PROGRAMME.**

1. Ouverture du Siège de Corinth, Rossini.
2. Canone “vaute a Colei che adoro” exécuté sur les Saxhorns par la famille DISTIN, Costa.
3. Ouverture de Trajan, Persuis.
4. Quintette “le Gypsy”, par la famille DISTIN, Balfé.
6. Quintette “la lune il sol le stella” (il Puritani) par la famille DISTIN, Bellini.

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214 Baderblatt für die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 7th July 1844.

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1844 July 15th\textsuperscript{215}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation with Aglaé Masson (Piano) also known as Louise Aglaé Masson Massart a composer and professor of piano, Paris Conservatoire. This concert was given in the presence of S. A. R. (Son Altesse Royale) Grande-Duchesse Stéphanie of Baden. (Stéphanie Louise Adrienne de Beauharnais 1789 –1860) was the adopted daughter of the Emperor Napoleon I and consort of Karl, Grand Duke of Baden.

The Grand Duke Karl died on December 8th\textsuperscript{1818} and Stephanie, his consort, remained a widow for the rest of her long life. She was reportedly a devoted mother to her three daughters and a supporter of the arts. Leopold I became Grand Duke of Baden (1790 –1852) succeeding Karl in 1830 as the fourth Grand Duke of Baden.

1844 July 20\textsuperscript{th}\textsuperscript{216} Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation with Mm Roger, premier tenor of the Paris Opera. Distins performed Serenade by Heinrich Panofka (1807- 1887) a renowned vocal teacher and violinist, who settled in Paris and was employed as a violinist.

1844 July 21\textsuperscript{st}\textsuperscript{217}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

\textsuperscript{215}Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 12\textsuperscript{th} July 1844.
\textsuperscript{216}Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{217}Ibid.,
1844 July 28\textsuperscript{th}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

1844 August 3\textsuperscript{rd}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

\textsuperscript{218} Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 28\textsuperscript{th} July 1844.

\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., 3\textsuperscript{rd} August 1844.
1844  August 11th\textsuperscript{220}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation

1844  August 13\textsuperscript{th}\textsuperscript{221}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation with: Boucher, Schulthes and Zerr. The piece played by the Distins was announced as \textit{Nouvelle Harmonie}.

1844  August 18\textsuperscript{th}\textsuperscript{222}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{220} \textit{Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden}, 11\textsuperscript{th} Aug. 1844.
\item \textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 18\textsuperscript{th} Aug. 1844
\end{itemize}
1844 August 25<sup>th</sup>. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

Aujourd'hui Dimanche, 25 Août,
A 8 heures du soir,
MUSIQUE
Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

PROGRAMME.

1. Ouverture de Sargine,  
   Auber.
2. Fantaisie sur des motifs de la Norma,  
   arrêté et exécuté par la famille DISTIN (anglais) sur les Saxhorns.
3. Ouverture de l’opéra La Violette,  
   Carafa.
4. Quintette, prière de Robert le Diable,  
   arrangée et exécutée par la famille DISTIN,  
   Mayerber,
5. Lichtenstein-Walzer,  
   Labitzky.
6. Quintette sur un motif de Balfe, exécuté par la famille DISTIN,  
   Lammy.
7. Hansjörgel-Polka,  
   Lammy.

1844 August 25<sup>th</sup>. Review translated from French:

Let us not overlook the Distins, who have come to Baden following their successes in Paris and have been the charm of the season.

1844 August 31<sup>st</sup>. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

The Distin Family performed only one piece: *Air de grâce de Robert le Diable*, arranged for quintet of Saxhorns, by Meyerbeer. The Grande-Duchesse Stéphanie attended.

1844 September 1<sup>st</sup>. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

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223 *Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1844.*
224 Ibid.,
225 Ibid.,
226 Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> September 1844.
Aujourd'hui Dimanche, 1er Septembre,
À 8 heures du soir,

MUSIQUE
Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

PROGRAMME.

1. Ouverture de Sargine,
   Paër.

2. Quintette sur un air de Joseph, arrêté et exécuté par la famille DISTIN,
   sur les Saxhorns (anglais),
   Méhul.

3. Ouverture de la Dame blanche,
   Boieldieu.

4. Romance de Guido et Ginévré, exécutée par Mr. Henry DISTIN avec accompagnement d'orchestre,
   Halévy.

5. Natalie, walse,
   Labitsky.

6. Fantaisie militaire, exécuté par la famille DISTIN avec accompagnement d'orchestre,
   Labitsky.

7. Adelaide, Polka,
   Buhl.

1844 September 8\textsuperscript{th}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

Aujourd'hui Dimanche, 8 Septembre,
À 8 heures du soir,

MUSIQUE
Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

PROGRAMME.

1. Ouverture de Zanetta,
   Auber.

2. Quintette sur le motif « Mira, o Norma, »
   arrangé et exécuté par la famille DISTIN
   (anglais), sur les Saxhorns,
   Bellini.

3. Ouverture de « Les deux aveugles de Toledo, »
   Méhul.

4. Quatuor, arrangé et exécuté par la famille DISTIN.

5. « Saison de Londres, walse,
   Labitsky.

6. Introduction suivie d'une polonaise p. l.
   Saxhorns, avec accompagnement d'orch.
   Buhl et Egéler.

7. Riquiqui-Galop,
   Labitsky.

1844 September 15\textsuperscript{th}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{227} \textit{Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden}, 8\textsuperscript{th} September 1844.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 15\textsuperscript{th} September 1844.}

Ray Farr
54
Aujourd'hui Dimanche, 15 Septembre,
À 7 heures et demie du soir,

MUSIQUE
Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

PROGRAMME.

N° 1. Ouverture de « le nouveau Paris, »
   (der Zauberflöte.)
   Maurcr. (Et. Cittl.)

» 2. Quintette « Fra poco à Me. » (Lucia),
   exécuté sur les Saxhorns par la famille DISTIN (anglais),
   Donizetti.

» 3. Ouverture pastorale,
   Kalliwoda.

» 4. Quintette sur des motifs de « Zampa, »
   exécuté par la famille DISTIN,
   Herold.

» 5. Charlotten-Walse,
   Labitzky.

» 6. Introduction suivie d'une polonaise pour
   les Saxhorns, avec orchestre,
   Bühl et Eychler.

» 7. « Norfolk, » Polka,
   Polka.

1844. September 22nd. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

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Baderblatt fur die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden, 22nd September 1844.
Appendix A

1844 September 29\textsuperscript{th}\textsuperscript{230}. Poster and programme for a performance in Maison de Conversation.

\begin{center}
\textit{Maison de Conversation.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Aujourd'hui Dimanche, 29 Septembre,}
\textit{À 7 heures et demie du soir.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{MUSIQUE}
\end{center}

Dans la grande salle de la Conversation.

\begin{center}
\textit{PROGRAMME.}
\end{center}

N° 1. Ouverture de "La muette de Portici," \textit{Auher.}

\begin{itemize}
\item 2. Quintette sur "Lucie," exécuté sur les Saxhorns, par la famille DISTIN, (anglais), \textit{Donizetti.}
\item 3. Ouverture de "Les aveugles de Tolède," \textit{Méhul.}
\item 4. Quatuor, exécuté par les frères DISTIN, \textit{Donizetti.}
\item 5. Solo pour deux clarinettes avec orchestre, \textit{Lahily.}
\item 6. Quintette sur un air de "Joseph," \textit{arrangé et exécuté par la famille DISTIN, Méhul.}
\item 7. Duoro-Valze, \textit{Labitzky.}
\item 8. Fanfare chevaleresque sur l'ordonnance de cavalerie, par Bubl, arrangé à grand orchestre par \textit{Bellet et Knyer.}
\end{itemize}

1844 September 29\textsuperscript{th} & 30\textsuperscript{th}\textsuperscript{231}. Poster for final concerts at Grossherzogliches Hoftheatre in Karsruhe.\textsuperscript{232}

\begin{center}
\textit{Vocal and Instrumental Concert by Messrs Distin (father and four sons) from England.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Grossherzogliche Hoftheater in Karlsruhe which was destroyed by fire in 1847.}
\end{center}

The Distin Family. – So well known throughout England for their Quintette performance on brass instruments, have been immensely successful during the past season in Paris, having performed at nearly all the great concerts, including those of Berlioz, Sivori, and Listz. Mr. Distin has received a very distinguished honour, having performed on the Trumpet, at the Conservatoire Royale de Musique, he was presented with a Silver Medal accompanied with a highly complimentary letter.

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Baderblatt für die Grossherzogliche Stadt Baden,} 29\textsuperscript{th} September 1844.

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Karlsruher Zeitung,} Sunday 29\textsuperscript{th} September 1844.

\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Karlsruher Tagblatt,} 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 1844.
Appendix A

The Distin family have also received a handsome silver medal for their performances at the grand concert at the Hotel de Ville from the “Societie Libre des Beaux Arts” accompanied by a complimentary address – and recently they have had the honour of performing, by special command, before their Majesties King Louis Philippe, the Queen, the Duc de Nemore, the Duc de Amaule, the Prince de Jouville, the Princess Adelaide, and many other distinguished persons. His Majesty conversed very affably, in English, with the Distins, and complimented them highly on their performances. He has made them a handsome present in requital for the gratification afforded him. The instruments they now perform on, are of an entire new construction, called the Saxhorns. The Distins are now giving concerts in Germany, with great success, and intend proceeding to Russia, returning to England at the commencement of next season. – From our Correspondent at Baden Baden.


The Messrs. Distin gave their first concert in Brighton last night at the Town Hall, and introduced the new ‘Saxhorn.’ Their success was complete. The saxhorn unites the powers of the French horn to those of the Cornet-a-piston; with the mellowness and sweetness of the former, and the brilliance of the latter, its tone is richer, and less metallic than that of the cornet-a-piston, though possessing the same flexibility and power of execution. The Misses Smith sang several of their most popular glees, and the concert passed off with éclat. – Brighton Guardian

1844 November. Distin performance in Arundel Castle.

The Distin family having returned from Germany, where they have been all summer, were sent for to Arundel Castle on Wednesday last, when they had the honor of playing on the Saxhorns before their Royal Highness the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and a distinguished party.


‘Of the performance on the Sax-horns it is impossible to speak too highly. The performance of Mr. Distin, sen, on the alto-horn excited some surprise among the musicians in Paris when Mr Distin had the honor of performing before the King of the French. The concert on Thursday evening was well attended. The last will take place this morning at the Newburgh Rooms.

1844 December. Distin performance at Covent Garden. Announcement in The Era:

*The Concerts Jullien will take place on Tuesday December 3rd 1844. Mr. Distin and his four sons, who after a long and most successful career in the continental cities, having just returned to England, have most kindly offered their services on this occasion. They will perform Meyerbeer’s Celebrated Cavatina, ‘Robert toi que j’aime,’ arranged as a quintette, and ‘Fra poco a me’, from Lucia di Lammermoor. The silver instruments on which Mr Distin and his Sons perform were presented to them by His Majesty Louis Philippe after having had the honor of playing before his Majesty in Paris.*

This is probably the report which gives rise to the misconception that the Sax instruments ‘were presented to them by Louis Philippe’.

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233 The Musical World, August 15th 1844.
234 Ibid., 7th 1844.
235 The Era, November 24th 1844.
236 The Musical World, December 5th 1844.
237 The Era, December 1st 1844.
December 3rd 1844 Distin performance at Covent Garden Theatre organised buy M. Louis Antoine Jullien (1812-1860) the French conductor and entrepreneur,

the great attraction of the evening was the Distin family, who have been, for the last six months in Paris and Germany, during which time they have lost no opportunity of improving themselves or their instruments. The latter, now used by them, are silver, and were presented to them by Louis Philippe, in consequence of the pleasure he received from their performance during the late Exposition. Their instruments, termed ‘Sax Horns’, were originally invented by M. Sax, of Paris, but have been greatly improved by the Distins, who performed, on Tuesday, the magnificent ‘Robert, toi que j’aime,’ and Donizetti’s touching ‘Fra Poco’– the finale to “Lucia di Lammermoor”, in both of which they were most enthusiastically encored. We really advise all who have not heard them to take an early opportunity of so doing.

Picture from The Illustrated News December 14th 1844

“THE DISTIN FAMILY”

The first appearance of these highly-gifted gentlemen at M. Jullien’s Concerts, was noticed in our journal of last week. They repeated their performances, with increased effect, during the past week. Mr. Distin and his four sons have been for several years before the public. Mr Distin se., for more than nine years, was principal trumpet in the private band of King George IV. The Distin Family have visited various parts of Scotland, Ireland and England, and have given upwards of seven hundred concerts. In December 1843, they proceeded to the continent, and were invited to make a trial of some newly invented instruments, manufactured by M. Adolphe Sax, in Paris. Upon the introduction of the Distin’s improved Sax Horns in Paris, they at once ensured success.

Invariably receiving the most enthusiastic applause, Mr Distin was requested by M. Habeneck, the Director of the ‘Conservatoire Royale de Musique,’ to perform some of Sebastian Bach’s and Handel’s compositions- (the former, in particular, having very difficult passages for trumpet)- which he did, and also the obligato to Handel’s ‘Let the Bright Seraphim’. – This composition had not been played in Paris for many years, as no French trumpet-player would attempt it. Mr Distin’s reception was a most brilliant one, the audience and orchestra manifesting their delight by the most enthusiastic plaudits. The directors then presented him with a handsome silver medal accompanied with a very flattering letter and address (an honour unprecedented for an English artist in Paris). Mr Distin and his four sons were

also presented with a splendid silver medal by the committee of the “Société libre des Beaux Arts’, with a very complimentary address, for their performance at their great concert at the Hotel de Ville.

The Distins are at present the only performers on the Sax Horn, which unites the powers of the French horn and those of the cornet à piston, but is infinitely superior to both for it combines the mellowness and sweetness of the former, with all the brilliancy and power of the later. The pieces which the Distins perform are of their own arrangement, and do credit to their musical skill.

1844 Distin – Sax controversy.

A controversy arose following this concert as the Musical world explains: “The Julienne concerts were very popular and well received. The name Saxhorn was not used in connection with Distin’s concert, as had been the earlier case with an concert given by A. Sax. Julienne’s manager would not allow the name saxhorn to be used for they had been played in the Adelphi Gallery and proved a failure.

“It was an unfortunate irony for Sax that the English introduction of his own instruments built under name Saxhorn should prove unsuccessful whereas the performance on the un-named saxhorns was highly successful.”

The controversy provoked an exchange of letters in the Musical World:

A “Foreign Visitor Resident in London” (Who must surely be Adolphe Sax himself.) wrote:

“When the Distin family a short time since, were engaged to play at the concerts of M. Jullien, they announced their performance for the first time on instruments which had been presented to them by his Majesty King Louis-Philippe. It appears to me that as a mere matter of justice, the Messrs. Distin should have the public know that the instruments called Saxhorns on which they were about to play, were the invention of M. Sax, by whose influence they (the Messrs. Distin) were enabled to perform before the King of the French, who presented them five hundred francs for their pains. One of these instruments (Saxhorns) was offered in person by M. Sax to his Royal Highness Prince Albert who honoured M. Sax by accepting it. These things should be made known, in justice to an artist of very great talent, and most unpretending manners”.

John Distin, writing from 6, Foley Place, Great Portland Street, London replied:

“When we were engaged by M. Jullien to perform at Covent Garden we particularly requested M. Sax’s name to be mentioned and to call the instruments “Saxhorns”. (The name which we gave them, as M. Sax thought of calling them cylinder Bugles). But the party who had their arrangement of these concerts said the name of Saxhorns should be omitted, as they had already (previous to our visit to London) been played by some parties at the Adelaide Gallery, and proved a failure. It will be seen that it was not by our wish that the name of Sax was left out of these bills, we never on any occasion omitted his name in our concert bills. As regards the Saxhorn presented by M. Sax to His Royal Highness Prince Albert, which the Foreign Artist Resident in London” describes as “one of the same instruments”, he is in error; as we have seen and tried it at Windsor Castle. It has not the same mechanism but is a very old German or Italian invention, called the “Double Cylinder” but (this word “but” was an errata) manufactured by M. Sax. We were the first who successfully introduced these instruments to the public in Paris – we played at all the principal concerts throughout the season. During this time we assisted and perfected the tenor and bass instruments, making the set complete; and performed at the great concert of M. Berlioz at the Opéra Comique and received the only encore during the concert. As a proof of our success we were presented with a silver medal by the “Conservatoire Royal de Musique” and “Society of Fine Arts”; and; without egotism, we were the making of M. Sax’s name as a manufacturer. We performed before His Majesty King Louis Philippe through the interest of

240 The Musical World, February 13th 1845 p.76.

Ray Farr 59
General de Rumigny. His Majesty conversed with us for some time and said, “I am delighted with your performance; I never expected to hear such beautiful sounds from such instruments. I return you my best thanks for the pleasure you have afforded me. Are the instruments of English manufacture? We answered, “No, your Majesty; they are the invention of M. Sax”- at the same time turning around and introducing M. Sax to His Majesty instead of M. Sax introducing us to him as the “Foreign Visitor Resident in London” asserts. The King certainly did, as is stated, send us a present of 500 francs, and to M. Sax a considerable sum, as we understood, to reimburse him for the instruments. It is our intention to do every justice to M. Sax”.

1844 December. Distin performance in St James Theatre.

We perceive that the celebrated family “Distin”, who are at present in London, contemplate, in conjunction with the Misses Smith, the talented vocalists, giving two concerts at the St. James Theatre, on the 18th and 23rd inst.

Two Grand Evening Concerts. Mr. Distin and his four sons, the original and unrivalled performers upon the Sax Horns, improved under the superintendence of the Distins.

1844 December 11th Distin performance in Brighton. Concert in Arundel Castle (Near Brighton).

An entertainment was given on Wednesday evening, by the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. About 200 of the nobility and gentry of the Western part of Sussex were invited. In the evening, a concert was given, Messrs. Distin, the performers on the new instrument the Saxhorn, and Messrs. Smith were engaged. The pieces performed by Messrs. Distin, gave the greatest satisfaction. – Mr. F. Smith presided at the piano-forte.

1844 December 14th. A Royal command performance at Windsor Castle before her Majesty and Prince Albert and the Royal circle. The programme included Robert toi que j’aime by Meyerbeer, Polish Serenade Manuscript, Canone Vanne a Colei che adore by Costa Introduction and La Chasse by Mendelssohn and items by Her Majesty’s private bandleader: Mr Anderson.

243 The Era, December 15th 1844.
244 The Era, December 15th 1844.
246 Ibid..
247 The Times, December 15th 1844 p. 333.
'The Queen and Prince Albert were graciously pleased to express their admiration of the performance of the Distin family, and Her Majesty commanded them to repeat the last piece, by Mendelssohn.'

1844 An entry in Queen Victoria’s Journal dated December 14th 1844 and quoted in Horwood’s book by the gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen:

‘...Mama &c. to dinner, after which there was some very good music & the Distin family, a father, & his 4 sons, played most beautifully and really touchingly on a species of trumpet or horn, called the Saxe Horn.’

1844 December 14th & 16th A Baugnus poster (published in USA 7th September 1849) announced performances by the Distins given before the Queen Victoria on December 14th & 16th 1844 and January 17th and May 16th 1845 and December 3rd 1846.


A concert was given here last night, the chief attraction of which consisted in the performance of the Messrs. Distin on the newly invented sax-horn. They played four concerted pieces arranged expressly by themselves. We have something to say about the sax-horn, and abstain here from further comment than a mere expression of admiration of the executive abilities of the Messrs. Distin, who have made a great reputation on the continent, and seem likely to sustain it in England. The only vocalists were the Misses Smith, who sang with great success, duets and original compositions from the pen of their brother, Mr. F. Smith, who presided at the pianoforte during the evening with ability. The lateness of the hour at which we write prevents us saying more now, but we shall attend a second concert announced by the Messrs. Distin for Monday evening at the same locale.


Mr. Distin and his four sons, the original and unrivalled performers upon the Sax Horns, improved and perfected under their supervision.


The Distin family on the saxhorns and Misses Smith (vocalists), Mr. F. Smith (piano accompaniment). "Robert, toi que j'aime" from Robert le diable by Meyerbeer arranged for a quintet by the Distins, "Peace Inviting" by H. R. Bishop (sung by Misses Smith and accompanied by J. Distin on the trumpet), "Fra poco a me" from Lucia di Lammermoor by Donizetti arranged for a quintet and played by the Distins.

The power which the Messrs. Distin have acquired on the Silver Sax Horns is extraordinary. The quality of tone is pure and delicious, and their facility in executing passages of tenderness approaches to vocalisation.

The Distin family, who had the honour of performing before her Majesty on Saturday, gave a concert last night at St. James’s Theatre. The patriarch of the family has improved the saxhorn, and managed to draw admirable tones from an instrument, which had been found perfectly immalleable amongst our Gallic neighbours. The performance of Mr. Distin and of his four sons is remarkable for ensemble, time, and purity of tone. We find the instrument in their hands sometimes produce upon the ear the effect of a combination of full-toned voices; but such

250 Ibid.,
251 The Era, December 22nd 1844.
253 The Era, December 22nd 1844.
performances do not bear repeated hearings, and, however well executed, a monotonous effect is ultimately produced. Neither of the instruments assumes sufficiently the ruling part to which should be destined the bringing out of the motive in relief; nor can those sudden musical transitions be executed which form one of the principal charms of music. In fact, the great sensation produced by the execution of an orchestra, is the contrast of the instruments in accent, in quality of tone, and in power. The elder Mr. Distin executed an air admirably on that most difficult instrument for a solo, the trumpet, and was vehemently applauded and encored, although certainly nothing could be worse chose than Moore’s ‘Last Rose of Summer.’ For an instrument destined in music to convey the fiercer emotions.  

1844 December 26th Distin performance in Windsor Castle.

“They performed a piece especially composed for them by Prince Albert”.  

The Distin family, the Sax Horn performers, have again during the week had the honor to attend at Windsor Castle, and receive her majesty’s gracious approval of their efforts.  

1845 January 1st Henry Distin registered a design for a Sax-horn with the Design Act of 1843: BT45/2345. The instrument design is very similar to the one seen in the famous picture of the Distins and their Saxhorn (1846), which is held by Henry Distin.  

1845 January. Distin performance in Norfolk.  

“sometimes faring well, and sometimes badly.”  

1845 January 17th. Distin performance in Stowe  

Distins perform at a Royal dinner party at the Court of Stowe before the Queen and Prince and nobility.  

The owner of the Court of Stowe was the Second Duke of Buckingham (Richard Plantagenet Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville [1797–1861]), who spent  

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254 Morning Post, December 19th 1844.  
255 The British Bandsman, March 1889.  
256 A poster describing a Distin performance gives the date as 16th December 1844.  
257 The Era, December 29th 1844.  
lavishly on the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, where they stayed from 15th to 18th January 1845. This visit, costing a large sum of money, started his financial collapse and by 1847 he left the country for India owing a million pounds. The duke was married to Lady Mary Campbell, youngest daughter of John Campbell, first marquis of Breadalbane, for whom Distin worked at Taymouth Castle.

In the course of the evening a concert was performed by the Distin family, who were then for the third time honoured with the command to play before the Queen. The pieces performed by them, on their silver sax horns, were:
- Quintette, Robert toi que j’aime - Meyerbeer
- Quartetto, Prize Glee, Harmony - Beale
- Trumpet Fantasia, The Soldier Tired - Dr. Arne
  (Soloist: J. Distin, accompanied on the pianoforte by Mr. James Perring)
- Quintette, Etude, Le Penitent Noir - Bertini
- Quintette, Fra poco a me (Luca) - Donizetti
- Quintette, Air de Joseph - Mehul
- God Save the Queen

The Distin family gave a concert on Saturday after the departure of the Queen at the Town hall, under the immediate patronage of the Duke of Buckingham and the officers of the Bucks Hussars.259

Peel has felt rather sore at the band at the Palace on several occasions striking up ‘Robert le Diable’. The Premier had his revenge, however, at Stowe, when the Distin family were commanded to play ‘Robert, toi que j’aime!’ No doubt, the compliment was duly appreciated.260

1845 January 18th Distin performance in the Town Hall, Stowe was crowded.

1845 January 20th and 21st Distin performance in Music Hall, Wolverhampton. The Distin quintet with Miss Spence (voice) and Mr. Perring (voice) [on the 20th], and Messrs. Hayward and Hay [on the 21st].261

1845 January 26th Distin performances in Leamington, Birmingham, and Wolverhampton.262 The Distin family have been making a most successful tour, being received with absolute enthusiasm at Leamington, Birmingham, and Wolverhampton. Nothing possibly can be conceived more charming than the performances of these gentlemen; their playing is the very perfection of instrumentation, and in their concerted pieces they are so exquisitely in tune, as to produce an effect truly magical. The Sax Horns, the splendid present from Louis Philippe, seem to be peculiarly adapted to the genius of these performers. For the third time, by command, they had the high honor of performing before her Majesty during her visit to Stowe, her Majesty most graciously expressing the pleasure she received, and Prince Albert and the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham joined in very flattering compliments. Their concert, on the 18th inst., at the Town Hall, was crowded. They expect to perform at Witley Court, before the Queen Dowager, in the course of the week, after which they re-visit the metropolis.

1845 January, Distin performance in Witley Court before the Queen Dowager.263 Dowager Queen Adelaide was the widow of William IV and resident of Witley Court.

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259 The Times, January 20th 1845 p5.
260 Satirist, February 2nd 1845.
262 The Era, January 26th 1845.
263 Age and Argus, February 1st 1845 p.11.
1845 January 28th Advert for a Distin performance in Covent Garden

'Covent Garden Grand Concert, Monday, Feb 3, at which the following will appear: …the Distin Family…'

1845 February 3rd. Covent Garden, London, Mr. Allcroft’s annual concert-monstre. The Distin family, Mr. Henry Russell (voice), Lindley (cello), and others.

1845 February 4th Distin performance review from Covent Garden.

'Covent Garden Theatre – Mr Allcroft’s eight annual concert came off last evening at this theatre, and attracted a most crowded audience…In the second part, the Messrs. Distin, on the silver Sax horns, were amongst the performers…'

1845 February 7th Distin performance in a Soiree Musicale, Hanover Square Rooms; "for the purpose of exhibiting M. Benedict’s Eolian Attachment to the pianoforte". The Distin family appeared among other artists: Mesdames Caradori Allan, Rainforth, Alfred Shaw, Masson, F. Lablache, Steele, Rodwell, Messent, Lear, Barrett, Williams, Sara Flower, Duval, Salamon; Signori R. Costa, Brizzi, F. Lablache, and Mr. Harrisson. Pianoforte Mr. Roeckel; violin Mr. Willi, violoncello Mr. Hancock; oboe Mr. Grattan Cooke.

1845 February 11th – 13th Distin performances in Worcester.

1845 February 18th Distin performance in Witley Court, Worcestershire.

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264 The Times, January 28th 1845.
265 The Morning Chronicle, February 4th 1845.
266 The Times February 4th 1845.
268 The Musical World, February 13th 1845 p.66.
269 Ibid.,
Appendix A

1845  March. Distin performances in Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, Preston, Oldham, and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{270}

1845  March 7\textsuperscript{th} Advert for Distin performance.

Theatre Royal Lyceum – Under the management of Mrs. Keeley. For the benefit of Mr and Mrs Keeley – last night of the seven. This evening will be presented in two…In the course of the evening Mrs Keeley will speak an address. Mr Distin and his four sons will perform on the Sax Horns…\textsuperscript{271}

1845  March 10\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Sussex Hall, Leadenhall Street, London. Mr. I. Cohan's concert.


1845  March 11\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, Mr. Rud's benefit. The Distin family, Mr. Jullien and the "Chimes Quadrilles", "The Sheriff of the County: Mr. John Parry, with "Grandfather Whitehead", and "Boarding School".\textsuperscript{273} Jullien's Chimes Quadrille was composed for the visit of Queen Victoria to the Court of Stowe January 1845.

\textsuperscript{270} The Musical World, March 1845 p.141.
\textsuperscript{271} The Times, March 7\textsuperscript{th} 1845.
\textsuperscript{272} The Musical World, March 6\textsuperscript{th} p.18.
\textsuperscript{273} Age and Argus, March 8\textsuperscript{th} 1845 p.1.
1845  March 13th and 15th Distin performance in the Star Assembly Rooms, Oxford. The Distins family with Mrs. Distin on the piano and the Rainer family.274

1845  March 16th Advert for Voice pastilles. Recommendations include Distins.

1845  March 16th Distin performance in Sussex Hall, Leadenhall street, London.

The quintet, by the Distin family, was charmingly executed; it is impossible to describe the effect of these Sax Horns in their oneness and exquisite modulation.

1845  March 24th Distin performance at Theatre Royal, Preston. 275

1845  March 30th Distin performance in Manchester.276

The Distin family have given concerts at the Athenaeum, which, however, were not very numerously attended, passion-week militating against success.

1845  March 31st Distin performance in Liverpool.

Liverpool Philharmonic Society First Full Dress Concert with Mr Distin and his four sons (Silver Sax Horns)277 and Mr William Sudlow (organ), led by Mr H. F. Aldridge and conducted by Mr J. Zeugheer Herrmann.

1845  April. Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Chester.278

1845  April 7th & 8th Distin performance in Royal Assembly Rooms, Liverpool. The Distin family and Mr. J. Perring (voice and piano).279

274 Jackson’s Oxford Journal, March 10th 1838.
275 Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, March 30th 1845.
276 The Era, March 30th 1845.
278 Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, April 6th 1845.
279 Liverpool Mercury, April 4th 1845.
Appendix A

1845  April 25th. Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms, Mrs. Alfred Shaw’s concert. The Distin family with the vocalists: Mesdames Caradori Allan, Rainsforth, W. H. Seguin, Blaes Meerti, Albertazzi, and F. Lablache; instrumentalistes: Madame Dulcken (piano), Messrs. Moschelles and Benedict (piano), M. Simon (violin), M. Case (concertina), M. Blaes (clarionet), and Moschelles Grand Septet. Conductors: M. Moschelles, and Benedict. A couple of quintets on the saxhorns.  

1845  May 4th & 5th Distin performance in Royal Assembly Rooms, Great George Street, Liverpool. The Distin family with Mr. Perring (piano accompaniment and voice). Mr. Perrin and Theodore sang a duet from Belisario. Theodore also sang a German song.  

1845  May 7th Distin performance in Freemasons’ Tavern, Great Queen Street, London, for the Covent Garden Theatrical Fund. By Royal command of the Duke of Cambridge. The Distin family, Mr. G. Cooke, the vocalists: Mr. P. Horton, Miss Romer, Misses Williams, Miss Lucombe and others. To render the vocal and musical entertainment of brilliant and surpassing attraction, the following popular artistes have kindly volunteered their eminent services: Mr Distin and his four sons will perform ‘Robert toi que j’aime’ on the Saxhorns and another fine piece.  

1845  May 16th Distin performance in a Soiree of the Duchess of Kent. The Distin family played before the Queen for the fourth time.  

1845  May 17th Distin performance at Her Royal the Highness Duchess of Kent’s evening concert at her residence Clarence House St James’s  

1845  May 18th Distin performance in Opera Concert Room, London, Mrs. Anderson’s Grand morning concert. The Distin family among numerous other artists.

280 The Musical World, April 24th p.191.  
282 The Era, May 11th 1845.  
283 The Era May 11th 1845.  
284 The Observer, May 4th 1845 p.2.  
285 The Observer, May 12th 1845.  
286 The Musical World, May 22nd p. 249.  
287 The Times, Saturday May 17th 1845.  
288 The Examiner, May 17th 1845.
May 23rd 1845 Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms, in aid of the Choral Fund. The Distin family. At the same concert also appeared: Madame Dorus Gras, Mademoiselle Schloss, the Misses Pyne, Miss Sabilla Novelo, and Miss Maria B. Hawkes; Mr. J. Bennett, Mr. Machin, Mr. J. Machin, Mr. J. Calkin, Herrn Pischeck, and Staudigl. And the instrumentalists: Mademoiselle Judine and Mr. Moscheles (pianoforte). Direction Henry R. Bishop, Messrs. Loder and G. F. Harris.\textsuperscript{289}

May 25th, Paris

“The Distins played for the Prince of Saxony-Weimar at the establishment of Adolphe Sax. The composers Berlioz and Adam were also present.”\textsuperscript{290}

\textit{The Sax instrument establishment at 50 Rue St Georges, Paris.}

\textsuperscript{289} The Musical World, May 22nd 1845 p.249.

\textsuperscript{290} REVUE ET GAZETTE MUSICALE de Paris, 1845.
May 30th Distin performance in Mr. John Parry's concert. The Distin family. At the same concert appeared: Mad. Dorus Gras, Misses Birch, Rainforth, Dolby, M. B. Hawes, &c. (voice). Madame Dulcken, and Mr. Godefroid (pianoforte & harp). The Distins played a fantasia on the saxhorns. 291

June. Distin perform six concerts in Dublin. 292

June 1st Review from Distin performance

'Madame Dulcken's concert – This annual concert took place yesterday… The concert commenced with a quintette by Mr Distin and his four sons, which was very effective, though better adapted to the open air…' 293

June 6th Distin performance in the Great concert room, Her Majesty's Theatre, Madame Dulcken's annual concert. The Distin family among other artists. The Distin family played a selection from Don Sebastian. 294

June 14th Distin performance in Hanover-Square rooms, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Seguin's concert. The Distin family among other artists. Quartets on the saxhorns. 295

June 15th Review of a Distin performance in Madame Sala's Concert-

292 Ibid., June 26, 1845 p. 308.
293 The Times, June 1st 1845.
294 The Morning Chronicle, June 9th 1845.
The Distin family modulated the power of their instruments to the size of the room with surprising judgement, which none but such proficients could effect.  

1845 June 14th Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms.

1845 June 19th Distin performance in St. Dunstan’s villa, Regent’s Park, morning concert and grand champêtre for the royal dispensary for the diseases of the ear. The Distin family among other artists.

1845 June 22nd Review of a Distin performance in M. Benedict’s Concert.

1845 June 23rd Distin performance in Philharmonic concerts, London.

Fantasia, Sax Horns, Messrs. Distin (on Themes from Robert le Diable) Distin.

1845 June. Letters to the Philharmonic Society.

Sir
In reply to your polite note we beg to tender our thanks to the Philharmonic Society and accept their offer of ten guineas for the performance of July at yours on the 23rd inst. Perhaps you will be so kind as to give me timely notice of what number of pieces will be required.

Forever
Your most obedient
John Distin
“The Distin Family”
49, Manchester St.
Manchester Square
Monday.

Sir
As the Philharmonic Society asked that we should play a selection from “Robert le Diable”- I enclose the title of it.

I am sir
Your obedient servant
John Distin
Fantasie on themes from “Robert le Diable” Saxhorns.
Mr Distin and his four sons. Meyerbeer.

1845 June. Reviews of the concert above.

Philharmonic Society – the seventh concert was given last night, and the following was the programme:

Part I… Fantasia sax horns, Messrs Distin (on themes from Robert le Diable) – Distin, ….

…Leader, Mr Loder, Conductor, Mr Mocheles…

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296 The Era, June 15th 1845.
297 The Times, June 10th 1845.
298 The Morning Chronicle, June 20th 1845.
299 The Era, June 22nd 1845.
300 The Musical World, June 19th p.296
301 British Library Letters.
Appendix A

... We can scarcely conceive how, at a concert professing to take so high a position so little of Beethoven was performed. A single overture was all we had from the composer of great symphony, and this was to compensate for a heap of mediocrity, consisting almost entirely of fantasias founded on operas, and arias of the commonest kind...

... The performance of the fantasia on Robert le Diable, by the Messrs. Distin is clever in itself, and the ensemble is perfect, but such pieces are certainly out of place at the Philharmonic...

The Messieurs Distin, a father and four sons, evince a very extraordinary command over instruments of rather refractory nature. These ‘Sax Horns’ ought rather to be called trumpets, for in tone they more resemble the latter than the former; they are loud, somewhat harsh, and certainly ill suited to a room. In the open air such performances would be found to have charms. ‘Sax,’ we may add, is the name of the introducer of this brazen and noisy progeny of trumpet and horn.

1845 June 23rd. A receipt from Distins

Received from Mr Anderson esq the sum of ten pounds ten shillings for professional services at the Philharmonic concerts
John Distin

1845 July. Distin gave four performances in Liverpool.

1845 July. Band Contest at Burton Constable (near Hull) organised by Sir Clifford Constable.

An account by Enderby Jackson of Hull recalling the events of the first formal Brass Band Contest in July 1845 held at Burton Constable Hall grounds (about eight miles from Hull).

A Memorable Day at Burton Constable

My acquaintance with the primary details attendant upon a competition of brass bands was gained in the year 1845, at a rural Magdalen Feast in the Deer Park of the heavily wooded grounds of Burton Constable (some eight miles distant from Hull), in assistance of charitable purposes, under the auspices of Sir Clifford and Lady Constable, Lord Beauchlere, the Ladies Chichester, the Tichbornes, and other visiting families of noble birth, who enjoyed the noted freedom and pleasure of that well know gay and hospitable barony.

302 The Times, June 24th 1845.
303 Musical Examiner, June 28th 1845.
Appendix A

Medieval games, falconry, archery, assaults at arms, and athletics, with a tenantry and cottars’ display of fruit and flowers, formed part of the attractions of the feast, acting as strong helpers to an outdoor excitement entirely unknown in Great Britain - 'an afternoon's rivalry of brass bands'. This perfect novelty on English soil was introduced by the Ladies Chichester, suitably planned from similar competitions they had witnessed in Southern France. The arrangements had been quietly progressing for some months, having been placed in the hands of Mr. George Leng (bandmaster to the barony, also leading violinist for Messrs. Ruderscroft and J. Thirlwall's Yorkshire concerts), the preliminary work being wisely entrusted to a musician well in touch with the surrounding gentry and bands.

Sir Clifford and Lady Constable empowered Mr Leng to offer as rewards twelve pounds and eight pounds to the two best bands visiting and competing at the feast; also promising that, if more than two bands contested, a purse of money should be gathered from the noble guests visiting at the ball for distribution amongst the non-winning bands. Mr Leng, strenuous in his work, obtained several promises of band attendances from quite unexpected quarters; in the meantime, keeping close his own counsel of the several localities from whence the attendant bands would come. Yet sufficient gossip to create great excitement oozed out from other quarters that Burton Constable would on the feast day witness a sharp musical competition; particularly as the number of players being restricted not to exceed twelve instruments in any one band (drums not allowed), great facilities were afforded for the best players of different districts being joined together, not only ensuring good bands, but a tolerable certainty of ambitious attendance at the gay and festive barony.

Then it was the fashion of the times for noblemen of spirit to have their own bandmasters, usually selecting one well versed in stringed instruments; but in the past few years, owing to the introduction of brass instruments, a knowledge in these was also deemed essential to form an efficient bandmaster. This fact, coupled with the high reputation of Burton Constable, greatly assisted the Chichester Magdalen Feast in obtaining the attendance of bands otherwise almost unobtainable on account of the incidental attendant expenses and possible loss of band prestige.

Early on the morning of the feast, Mr G. Leng and his select Burton Constable quadrille band of violins, harp, violoncello, flute (myself), and clarinet drove from Hull. However our services were not required until after the brass bands in attendance had finished the event of the day - the outdoor friendly competition; when our duties were required in the grand banqueting hall to accompany a series of showy pageants and pictures by the house visitors in costumes illustrating historical events for the gratification of the numerous tenantry cottars and friends of the barony. When this was concluded and the outdoor sports had terminated, the parting bell was rung and the park gates closed our musical services were again required (after a suitable refreshing and dressing interval) to play dance music to one of the grand mythological costume balls, for which Burton Constable in certain circles was as famed as Eglinton for its gorgeous tournaments.

In the brilliant morn the drooping foliage glittered in ever changing colours, as gentle zephyrs undulated their light tremulous holdings, around the platform reared for the use of the bands, heavily draped with scarlet cloth and wreathed around with French silken streamers. On one side of the platform was placed a small tent, red striped, for the comfort of the chosen judge; and further removed was a large marquee for the tenant and cottar's exhibits, which were tastefully arranged within in groups forming banks of flowers and grots of fruit, palms, wild flowers and vegetables, proving the artistic skill of the resident landscape gardener. Archery grounds were placed on select velvety lawns, at other times kept strictly private, but now ornamented with striped marquees of varied suitable colours for the respective class distances of the hopeful competitors.

In adjacent parts of the park highly decorated maypoles were erected for the recreation of the assembled visitors; their brilliant gold, silver and silken bands, with delicate streamers and quivering flags fluttering and sporting in the light airy currents were a sight worth remembering. The country dance courses for Sir Roger de Coverley and sites for the 'kissing rings' were marked out, and happy red faced local countryside fiddlers, with their well worn green baize bags encasing their cherished heirloom violins, accompanied by a couple of English drone pipers, were already waiting in the park when we arrived in our waggonette.

At eleven a.m. the ponderous gates of the Deer Park were thrown open; broad charity sheets duly
suspended near the entrance columns, also in other parts of the grounds. Visitors of all ages and conditions of life - on foot and horseback, in gigs, carriages, dogcarts, waggonettes and farmer's waggons - were all equally welcome and admitted. Pleasure seekers from Patrington were among the first to gather up in force, headed by their local brass band, consisting of three cornopeans, two keyed bugles, one trumpet, two trombones, one ophicleide and three serpents, led by James Dalton. They lustily pealed out, aided vocally by their admiring followers 'The Fine Old English Gentleman'. Mr Leng met the band at the terminus of the magnificent entrance avenue formed of lime, chestnut, sycamore, and cedar trees, and delegated me and our cello player (W. Retalic) to escort them to the private refreshment tent.

Distant music and cheers announced a second arrival. Quickly dashing up the grand avenue post haste in a four horse waggonette, with colours flying, came Holmes Hull Tannery Brass Band, led by the best local player (Mr. Tom Martin), boldly pealing out 'Lützow's Wild Hunt'. Cheer after cheer accompanied them to the refreshment tent, the hope of victory beaming in their sparkling eyes. Again martial strains are heard, and all turn to see steadily prancing up the avenue in a large light van belonging to the company, richly decorated with coloured mill trimmings, the newly formed Hull Flax and Cotton Mills Band, playing 'The Dashing White Sergeant'; under the experienced lead of James Bean.

Anxious enquiries were now frequent on every side. 'Have all the expected bands arrived?' 'Who'll win?' 'Who's to judge?' 'What band is it?' 'Where are they from?' All the hubbub when, dashing into the park, comes a four-in-hand coach in full May day panoply of sixty years ago. Each horse is decorated with rosettes and long streamers of narrow various coloured ribbons attached to its head gear and neck; the gorgeous portly driver with red beaming face, attired in crimson coat and gold corded hat, and long whip streaming with ribbons, completed the resemblance. Small flags and rosettes peeped from every projecting portion of the coach, partly concealing the happy musical occupants, whose highly polished brass instruments gleamed as gold amidst the bedecking ribbons. The occupants earnestly blow out 'Forester, sound the cheerful horn', and the gathering crowd cheer and shout. 'Why it's one of ould squire's coaches fra Sledmere!' 'It's Sir Tatton's lot fra Malton and Driffield!' 'Ah, sure! and that Jim Walker fra York that's leading em! My word on't; they'll prove a tough lot to beat!' Mr. Leng personally met them, cordially shaking hands with Mr. Walker, a gentleman personally well known to all our band, he often coming from York to play with us at district and county balls. While yet the two friends were in conversation, fresh sounds were heard, and another rush was made to the avenue, where, cheerily playing the popular melody 'With a helmet on his brow', Lord Yarborough's Brockelsby Yeomanry Band, led by J.C. Acey (the young musical genius of Kirkella), made their unexpected appearance. The waggonette and horses were showily decorated in keeping with their brilliant uniforms. Hearty cheers, loudly prolonged, welcomed them, keeping up until Mr. Leng made his appearance on the platform and announced that, the promised bands having all arrived, the competition would commence at half past one prompt, and that falconry, quarterstaff, and sack racing would until then engage the attention, so giving time for the five attendant bands to refresh, draw lots for the order of playing, and otherwise prepare themselves to contest the Lady Chichester's French novelty. After the competition, the declaration of the result would immediately be made known, and be followed on the platform by assaults at arms, and on the lawns by feats of archery for the Constable Silver Arrow, the feast terminating with champêtre dancing to joyous music by the victorious bands. After this oratorical effort, the bandsmen were taken to the archery marquée, where Lady Clifford Constable, surrounded by the guests of the mansion, rose to meet them, cordially thanking them for their welcome attendance, dwelling at some length on the benefits that must accrue to music and also to musical homes if similar meetings were arranged in other parts of musical Yorkshire. Finally, her ladyship requested each of the bands to strive hard to obtain one of the honourable winning places; yet, as three aspirants, however excellent, must remain unplaced, a solacing purse would be gathered by friends present for division - to soften the expenses of the non-winners - at the discretion of the musical judge, Mr. Richard Hall (organist of St. Charles, Hull), who had been carefully selected by the Ladies Chichester. Mr. James Dalton returned thanks to her ladyship and guests for their liberality in music's cause on behalf of the bands, who gave three cheers for the ladies, and lots were at once drawn for the order of playing.
The first brass band to mount a contesting platform in Yorkshire was the Brockelsby Yeomanry Band, formed of four cornopeans, two Sax tenors, three trombones, one Sax bass, and two ophicleides. They chose as their competitive piece of music a selection from the works of Sir Henry Bishop, consisting of 'Should he upbraid', 'MNheer van Dunk', &c. That the performance of this band gave enjoyment to the assemblage was distinctly proved by the applause which greeted them as they re-entered the park from the platform.

Their place was taken by Holmes Tannery Band, with a similar instrumental formation; excepting that the leader played a Sax's recent cornet-à-piston, as introduced by the Distin family in their last 1844 tour. This band's musical choice was a wise one, being a selection from Mozart's Twelfth Mass. Rapturous cheers, not unmingled with religious party zeal, greeted their really excellent playing of this very grand music.

The Hull Flax and Cotton Mills Brass Band (led by Mr. James Bean, also on a Sax cornet-à-piston) was the third band seeking honours on the platform. The instruments of this band unfortunately were not equal to those of the two preceding them; and, although they played 'Hail, smiling morn' fairly well, their best efforts fell flat on the assembled crowds, and they left the platform with but few hands in their favour.

The fourth band to ascend the rostrum was entered as the Wold Brass Band, led by Mr. James Walker of York, who played upon a D flat soprano cornet. This band contained one Sax cornet-à-piston, two cornopeans, two valved French horns, three trombones, one ophicleide, with one solo valved bass, and one valved tuba, both made (as was also the soprano) by the rising musical instrument maker of Yorkshire, Mr. Wigglesworth of Otley. The music selected by this band, from Rossini's 'Barber of Seville', was specially arranged to show the artistic skill of each member of the band, enthusiastic shouts of pleasure, mixed uncanny with the delightful airy playing of the band, a new school of playing was being introduced, and on conclusion of the piece tremendous cheers followed their retirement from the platform.

The Patrington Band, as fifth and last competitor, next occupied the attention of the judge by a small pot pourrie of country airs. Unfortunately their instruments were perverse, as well as imperfect, and caused their well meant efforts to pass totally unregarded by their friends and the populace. After they quietly vacated, Mr. G. Leng appeared and stated that the judge wished to hear the second and fourth bands play again. The second band this time to play a sacred piece, thus enabling him to accurately determine each band's respective and combined excellence.

After a short interval the second band, amidst loud applause, resumed their place upon the platform. The conductor raised his arm and the band commenced pp. the Prayer from Weber's 'Der Frieschütz', followed by a spirited selection from the same opera, full of fire and brilliancy. The spectators seemed assured that this band would easily win first place, and loudly gave free scope to their belief; but the Woldsmen smiled cheerily, not at all discouraged at the hostile demonstration.

Without delay the fourth band remounted the platform, and calmed the hubbub with the fine style of playing the well-known introductory strain of the chorus so dear to every Yorkshireman, Handel's sublime 'Hallelujah Chorus!' 'Uncover!, Uncover! Hats off!' resounded on all sides; and in bare headed reverence the assembled rustics listened motionless to the finest performance they had ever heard of their deeply loved chorus. The expression of feeling evinced on the band leaving the stand can only be understood by musical enthusiasts.

After a short pause, Mr. G. Leng accompanied Mr. Richard Hall, who announced his decision of the result of the playing - viz., that the Wolds Brass Band (the fourth) was the winner of the first prize of twelve pounds; and the Holmes Tannery (the second) was the winner of the second prize of eight pounds. Escorted by Lord Beauclerc, the Ladies Chichester ascended the dais and presented the prizes to the two winning bands, with an extra purse of sixteen pounds to be divided five pounds to each of the three non-winning bands, and the odd sovereign to be given to the judge. Thus terminated the Chichester Brass Band Contest in 1845.

The bands dispersed, playing on the lawns; and the coloured fiddler, Fred Freedee assured Mr. Leng that he (Freedee) would uphold the dignity of the profession by his grand rendering of 'Haste
to the wedding’, ‘Garry Owen’, and ‘Sir Roger’ (aided by his drone players) in the rustic dances, and he triumphantly shook his old fiddle bag of many colours in proof. We in our turn adjourned to the hall to play for the pageant and the mythological ball.

Over fifty years have passed away since that inaugural Chichester contest. The grass grows green over all I can call to remembrance as taking an active part therein, and one voice alone remains to reawaken echoes fading into the solitudes of glimmering space.

1845 July 7th Distin performance in Portobello Gardens.306

The attractive programme and the auspicious state of the weather secured a very numerous assemblage of fashionables at these favourite gardens on Saturday evening. The Distin family executed several popular airs on their newly invented Sax Horns, which elicited repeated and deserved applause. Miss Rebecca Isaacs sang ‘Then you’ll remember me’ with great sweetness and expression. She was accompanied on the Sax horn by Mr. Henry Distin, whose sweet and distinct tones commanded for the fair vocalist and himself a loud and unanimous encore. The successful efforts of an accomplished pianiste (sic), Miss Emma Corri, in a duet with her father, Mr. Hadyn Corri, won for her a flattering manifestation of applause.

1845 July 21st Distin performance on the London City barge “Swan Hopping”307 from Westminster Bridge to Twickenham. The Distin family, the bands of the Coldstream Guards.308

1845 July 27th. Distin performance on a barge for the Lord Mayor of London.309

1845 August. Distin performances in Uxbridge, Bath, Carnarvon, Bangor, Beaumaris, and Shrewsbury (6 concerts). The Distin Family with Misses Williams, Messrs. Machin, John Parry, and Birch.310

1845 August 11th & 12th Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Bristol. The Distin family with Miss Rebecca Isaacs (voice). Selections from works of Bellini, Meyerbeer, Donizetti, and others.311

1845 August 13th Distin performance in Gothic Hall, Sydney Gardens, Bath. The Distin family with Miss Rebecca Isaacs (voice). Cantata by Beethoven arranged for the saxhorns.312

1845 August 18th & 19th. Distin performance in Bristol. The Distin family with Miss Rebecca Isaacs (voice).

The Soldier Tired (John Distin).313

1845 August 21st Distin performance in Birmingham Town Hall. Mr. Machin's concert. The Distin Family. A number of artists also assisted: Grisi, Mario, Lablache, Miss Barrett, and John Parry.314 315

306 Freeman's Journal and Daily Communications Advertiser, July 7th 1845.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid., July 24th 1845.
310 The Era, July 27th 1845.
311 The Musical World, August 14th 1845 p.393.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid., pp. 403-404.
314 Ibid., July 24th 1845 p.356.
Appendix A

Mr. Machin's annual Vocal and Instrumental concert with the Distin Family, Grisi, Mario, Lablache, Benedict, John Parry, Miss Barrett.¹

1845 August 22nd & 28th Distin performance in Carnarvon, North Wales.²

1845 August 23rd Distin performance in a Private concert at the mansion of the Marquis of Anglesea, Isle of Anglesea.³

1845 August 23rd & 29th Distin performance in Bangor ⁴

1845 August 27th Distin performance in a Private concert at Penrhyn Castle (Col. Pennant, M. P.).⁵

1845 September 10th 15th 17th & 19th Distin performances in various unnamed locations.⁶

1845 September 1st -3rd Distin performance in Shrewsbury.⁷

1845 September 5th Distin performance in Denbigh & St. Asaph.⁸

1845 September 6th Distin performance in Liverpool (attended by 2500 people), Saturday evening concerts.⁹

1845 September 8th & 9th. Distin performance in the Lion Hotel, Warrington.¹⁰

1845 September 22nd & 25th Distin performance in York ¹¹

1845 September 24th Distin performance in Scarborough (last concert of the season before departing for Germany and Russia).¹²

1845 September 30th Distin performance in the Concert Hall, Liverpool (and another two concerts during the same week). The Distin family assisted by Miss O’Connor (voice), and Mr. J. Smith. Music of Weber, Mendelssohn, Donizetti and others.¹³

1845 October 6th Distin performance in the Theatre, Stafford, Wolverhampton.¹⁴

² The Musical World, August 1845 p.417.
³ Ibid., September 18th 1845 p.454.
⁴ Ibid.,
⁵ Ibid.,
⁶ Ibid.,
⁷ Ibid.,
⁸ Ibid.,
⁹ Ibid.,
¹⁰ Ibid.,
¹¹ Ibid., and Liverpool Mercury, September 5th 1845.
¹² The Musical World, September 18th p.454 and Liverpool Mercury, September 12th 1845.
¹³ Ibid.,
¹⁴ Ibid.,
¹⁵ Liverpool Mercury, September 29th 1845.
¹⁶ The Musical World, September 25th 1845 p.466.
1845 October. Distin performance in De Grey Rooms, York (two concerts). The Distin Family and Miss Rebecca Isaaks (voice). Selections from the music of Donizetti, Bellini, Meyerbeer, Beale, Arne, Balfe, and Rossini.331

1845 October. Performances in Stafford, Ryeley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Hanley & Langton.332

1845 October 15th Distin performance in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson St. Liverpool333.

Farewell Concert on Wednesday October 15th, which will be positively their last appearance in Liverpool previous to their departure for Germany. Mr. Distin will perform a Fantasia on the trumpet and with his four sons, selections of their much-admired Quintette, from the works of Beethoven, Spohr, Meyerbeer, Mahul, Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, on their beautiful instruments the Sax Horns. Mr. H. Distin will perform a solo on the French Horn also on Sax’s improved Clavicor! Which will be introduced for the second time in this country, having just received it from Mons. Adolphe Sax’s Manufactory. The Messrs. Distin are Sole Agents for this instrument, of whom DISTIN’S REGISTERED SAX HORNs are to be had.

Programme:
Fa Poco a me (Lucia)    Donizetti
Vocal solo: Miss Amelia Hill
French Horn Solo Mr. Henry Distin
Vocal solo: Miss Amelia Hill
Cantata: Adelaide Beethoven
Vocal solo: Miss Amelia Hill
Sax Horn quartet Vivi Tu (Anna Bolena) Donizetti

Interval (10 minutes)
Fantasia for trumpet John Distin
Vocal solo: Miss Amelia Hill
Solo on Sax’s improved Clavicor Mr. Henry Distin
Vocal duet (Don Pasquall) Miss Amelia Hill & Mr Theodore Distin
Fantasia on Robert le Diable Distin
Then You’ll Remember Me (Bohemian Girl) Balfe
Miss Amelia Hill with Sax Horn obligato Mr. Henry Distin
Finale: God Save the Queen Arr. By Distins

The price of a reserved seat: 2 shillings
N.B. The Messrs. Distin will have a few of their registered Sax Horns, Sax’s Improved Clavicor, and Sax’s improved cornet-a-pistons for sale.

331 The Musical World, October 9th 1845 p.490.
332 Ibid., October 16th 1845 p.502.
333 See Poster Wednesday October 15th 1845.
CONCERT HALL, LORD NELSON-ST.

MR. CHAS. HOLLINS

Deals most respectfully to inform the Inhabitants of Liverpool, and the Vicinity, that he has
RE-ENGAGED THE CELEBRATED
DISTIN FAMILY,
The Original and only Performers on the Newly-Invented Instruments, their
SILVER SAX HORMS!

FAREWELL CONCERT!

At the above Rooms.
On WEDNESDAY, OCT. 15, 1845,

Positively their Last Appearance in Liverpool,

PRIVIOUS TO THEIR DEPARTURE FOR GERMANY!

MR. DISTIN

WILL PERFORM A FANTASIA ON THE TRUMPET, AND WITH HIS FOUR SONS,

Selections of their much-admired Quintettes, from the works of Beethoven, Strauss,
Mayrbeer, Mahul, Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti, on their beautiful Instruments,

THE SAX HORN.

Mr. H. DISTIN will perform a SOLO on the FRENCH HORN,

ALSO A SOLO ON SAX’S IMPROVED CLAVICOR!

Vocalist:

MISS AMELIA HILL,

(As the Royal Academy of Music, Pupil of Saverio Mercadante.)

MR. E. F. SMITH WILL PRESIDE AT THE PIANO-FORTE.

Programme:

Part I.

Quintette—"Le Papillon" (Ludolf)—SAX BORNS, Messrs. DISTIN.
Concertino—"Raghigh & Cie."
Miss AMELIA HILL—SAX BORNS.
SOG.—FRENCH HORN—Mr. H. DISTIN.
SAX BORNS—"Adagio," Miss AMELIA HILL.
SAX BORNS—"Harmonie," Mr. H. DISTIN.
SAX BORNS—"Vivace," Miss AMELIA HILL.

An interval of ten minutes.

Part II.

Excerpts—TRUMPET—Mr. H. DISTIN.
Excerpts—SAX BORNS—Mr. H. DISTIN.
Excerpts—SAX BORNS—Miss AMELIA HILL.
Excerpts—SAX BORNS—Mr. H. DISTIN.

Prices of Admission:—RESERVED SEATS, 2s.—GALLERY, 1s.—BODY, 6d.

Taken for the Reserved Seating to be had at Mr. THUPEL’s, Miss Woodbine, Lord Street, Mr. THUPEL’S WOODRIDGE, Brookside, Monckton Street, and Mr. CHARLES ROUMING, No. 1, Charlotte Terrace.

The Messrs. DISTIN will have a few of their REGISTERED SAX BORNS, SAX BORNS IMPROVED CLAVICOR, and SAX BORNS IMPROVED CONCERT-PIANINO, for Sale.
1845 October. Distin performances in Germany and Russia.  


1845 November 3rd & 4th. Distin performance in City Hall/Assembly Rooms, Glasgow with Jullien's Band.  

The Distin family with Miss Amelia Hill (voice), and Mr. A. Loder (piano). Selections from Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable, Mehul's Joseph, Donnizetti's Lucia di Lamermoor, Bellini's I Puritani, and selections from works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn.  


Selections from Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable, Mehul's Joseph, Donnizetti's Lucia di Lamermoor, Bellini's I Puritani, and selections from works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn.  

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335 Ibid., October 16th 1845 p.502.  
337 Glasgow Herald, October 31st 1845.  
338 The Scotsman, November 1st 1845 p. 3.
FIRST APPEARANCE IN EDINBURGH
SINCE THEIR RETURN FROM THE
CONTINENT.

MUSIC-HALL, GEORGE STREET.

THE DISTIN FAMILY,
who have had the honour of performing
by command, on several occasions, before
Her Gracious Majesty the Queen,
Her Majesty the Queen Dowager,
Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent,
His Royal Highness Prince Albert,
His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge,
And in Paris before his Majesty King Louis Philippe,
Have the honour of announcing that their
LAST GRAND EVENING CONCERT
WILL be given in the MUSIC-HALL,
THIS EVENING.

MR. DISTIN AND HIS FOUR SONS,
The original and only performers on the newly-
invented Instruments,
The Sax Horns!

Whose performances have created such an extraordinary sensation on the Continent and in London.
Since their return they have had the honours of performing, by command, on four different occasions,
before her Majesty and the Royal Family. Her Majesty and Prince Albert were graciously pleased to
express their high admiration of their performance and the beauty of their Instruments. The Messrs.
DISTIN were presented in Paris with two SILVER MEDALS, by the "Conservatoire Royal de
Musique," and the "Societé libre des Beaux Arts," and created, as in London, quite a furor, and were
highly complimented by the celebrated Composers, Auber, Caraffa, Spontini, Hector Berlioz, Adolphe
Adam, Featis, &c.; and in Germany by many of the great Kapellmeisters; also by the Grand Duke and Duchess of
Baden, Prince Frederick and Princess Nassau, at the Court of Carlisle, and many of the reigning
Princes.

They will perform, among other Memories, selections from Meyerbeer’s "Robert le Diable," Muhul’s "Joseph," Donizetti’s "Lucia di Lammermoor," and Bellini’s "I Puritani." Also from the works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, on the
SILVER SAX HORNS, presented to them in Paris after performing to his Majesty the King of the French.

VOCALIST, MISS AMELIA HILL,
Of the Royal Academy of Music, and Nobility’s

PIANOFORTE, MR. A. T. Loder.

Doors open at half past seven. "Concert to commence at eight o’clock.
Programmes and Tickets may be had of the following Music-sellers—Messrs. Wood & Co., 12 Water
Place, Paterson & Roy, Robertson, Purdie, and Coval.

* * * Distin’s Registered Sax Horns, Sax’s Improved Cornet-a-Pistons, Sax’s Improved Clarion,
to be had of Messrs. Wood & Co.

Admission—Body of the hall, 2s.; Gallery, 1s.
The Distin Family, who have had the honour of performing by command, on several occasions, before Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty the Queen Dowager, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, And in Paris before his Majesty King Louis Philippe, have the honour of announcing that their last grand evening concert will be given in the Music-Hall this evening.

Mr. Distin and his four sons, the original and only performers on the newly-invented Instruments, THE SAX HORNS! Whose performances have created such an extraordinary sensation on the continent and in London. Since their return they have had the honour of performing, by command, on four different occasions, before Her Majesty and the Royal Family. Her Majesty and Prince Albert were generously pleased to express their high admiration of their performances and the beauty of their instruments. The Messrs. Distin were presented in Paris with two silver medals, by the ‘Conservatoire Royale de Musique,’ and ‘Societe Libre des Beaux Arts,’ and created, as in London, quite a furor, and were highly complimented by the celebrated Composers Auber, Caraffa, Spontini, Hector Berlioz, Adolphe Adam Featis, &c.; and in Germany by many of the great Kappelmeisters; also by the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden, Prince Frederic and Princess Nassau, at the Court of Carlsrube, and many of the reigning Princes.

They will perform, among other Morecaux, selections from Meyerbeer’s ‘Robert le Diable,’ Mehull’s ‘Joseph,’ Donizetti’s ‘Lucia di Lammermoor,’ and Bellini’s ‘I Puritani.’ Also from the works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, on the Silver Sax Horns, presented to them in Paris after performing to his Majesty the King of the French.

Vocalist Miss Amelia Hill, of the Royal Academy of Music, and Nobility’s Concerts, London, pupil of Signor Negri. Pianoforte, Mr. A. T. Loder.  

*Distin’s Registered Sax Horns, Sax’s Improved Cornet-a-pistons, Sax’s Improved Clavicor, to be had of Messrs Wood & Co.

1845  November 3rd & 5th Distin performance in Assembly Rooms, Glasgow. The Distin family, with Miss Amelia Hill (voice), and Mr. A. Loder (piano). Selections from Meyerbeer’s Robert le Diable, Mehul's Joseph, Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, Bellini's I Puritani, and selections from works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

1845  November 12th 24th & 25th. Distin performance in Music Hall, Edinburgh. The Distin family, with Miss Amelia Hill (voice), and Mr. A. Loder (piano). Selections from Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable, Mehul's Joseph, Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, Bellini's I Puritani, and selections from works of Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

1845  November 16th - December 16th Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre, London.

Mr. Allcroft has the honour to announce his intention of giving a series of vocal and instrumental Promenade concerts, to commence on Monday, November 16th, and to be continued every evening for one month only…also those celebrated artistes The Distin family, whose performances on the sax horns have been the theme of admiration through all the courts of Europe. Conductor Mr. Negri.

1845  November 22nd Distin performance in City Hall, Glasgow, Saturday evening concerts. The Distin family with Mr. D. Brown (voice).
Appendix A

1845 November 27th Distin performance in Music Hall, Newcastle. The Distin family with Miss Amelia Hill (voice), and Mr. A. Loder (piano).  

1845 December

"The Distin Family have just returned to town from North. They will soon proceed to the continent. They have letters from H. R. H. the Duchess of Kent to the King of the Belgians, the Duchess of Neumours, the Grand Duke of Saxe Cobourg Gotha, the Duke of Saxe Weimar and other illustrious personages."  

1846 January. The Distins depart for Paris and Brussels before travelling to Germany.  

The Distin Family left London for a concert tour to Paris, Brussels, Hanover, Brunswick and Berlin where they were favourably received.  

1846 January. Distin performance in Paris. They assisted at a concert given by La France Musicale.  

1846 February 6th Distin performance in the Tuilleries, Paris, before the presence of his Majesty Louis Philippe who "expressed himself highly delighted with the performance, and requested that it might close with God Save the Queen."  

1846 February 7th Distin performance in France.  

The Distin family received the honor of a command from the King to perform last night at the Tuileries before their Majesties and the Royal Family. This soiree musicale was given solely for the display of the talents of this gifted family. They also played on Sunday last before the Duke de Montpensier and a numerous company. His Royal Highness conversed a long time with Messrs. Distin, and expressed his high approbation and delight in very flattering terms.  


1846 March 12th Distin performance in Hanover. The family performed on the saxhorns. Principal musicians of Hanover were among the audience.  

1846 March 13th Distin performance in Hanover.  

The concert given yesterday by the Messrs. Distin (father and sons) was in every respect, extremely interesting; these artists use their splendid instruments (the Sax horns) with a most remarkably superiority; and I feel bound to testify that their execution really leaves nothing to be desired. An ensemble so perfect has never before been heard. These five artists play as if they were one man. To say how great, how profound was the impression which they produced upon the

344 The Newcastle Courant, November 28th 1845.
345 The Musical World, December 11th 1845 p.596.
346 Ibid., January 1846 p.5.
348 The Musical World, January 1846 p.52.
350 The Era, February 15th 1846.
public, is an impossibility; during their entire concert, nothing like the slightest idea of criticism could enter the minds of their audience.

Opportunities of hearing such a marvellous ensemble are to be sought the more eagerly in proportion to their rarity; and I do not doubt that all Germany – which has ever been distinguished for its doing justice to foreign artists – will everywhere reserve for these eminent musicians the truly splendid reception which their great talents deserve. Signed Dr. Marschner. 351

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1846 March 21st Adolphe Sax patented the saxophone354 patent #3226 of March 21, 1846 is composed of eight saxophones [http://www.selmer.fr/histdetail.php?id=3](http://www.selmer.fr/histdetail.php?id=3)

1846 March 22nd Distin performance in the Palace, Charlottenburg. Quintet from Lucia di Lammermoor of Donizetti, quintet Elegie by Ernst composed originally for the violin, Quartet, English Glee, "Harmony" by Beale, "Fantasie" from Robert le Diable by Meyerbeer, "Fantasie" from Il Torneo by the Earl of Westmoreland, "Quintet" from Fidelio by Beethoven, "Fantasia on Scottish Airs". Meyerbeer presented the Distins with selections from his operas arranged for their own instruments. 355

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353 Pictorial Times, June 1846.
March 24th Distin performance in Saale der Sing-Akademie, Berlin, in the presence of the King and Queen of Prussia. The Distins appeared at the concert of Vieuxtemps and performed the quintet from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and a fantasia from *Robert le Diable*. Vieuxtemps performed his second concerto and the "Fantasia" on *Norma* on the fourth string. Ferdinand Hiller's concerto was also performed and conducted by the composer himself.  

April 3rd Letter from Meyerbeer.

I entirely agree, and with a perfect conviction of its truth, in the opinion expressed by my illustrious colleague, Marschner, on the Messieurs Distin. Never have I heard wind instruments played with so much splendour, purity, and precision; to add to this, that nothing equals the grandeur of their style – the astonishing ensemble which pervades their execution, is only to say, that the brilliant reception which they have met with has been more than justified by talent so truly remarkable. Signed G. Meyerbeer

April. Further commendation from Meyerbeer.

[Meyerbeer was] so moved by their performance that he wrote ..praising “the nobility of their delivery and their ensemble’ together with ‘the great mastership of their production’ .

April. Distin performance in Hanover, Brunswick (2 concerts at the Hof theatre), Berlin.

April 17th Report on Distin performances in Germany:

The Distin Sax-horn family are now creating a furor in Germany; in Hanover, Brunswick, and Berlin, these artists and their instruments are turning all the heads of Germanic Kings, Princes, Dukes and dilettanti. On the other side of the Rhine, says our informant, people only swear by the cylinders of Sax….

April. Report on Distin performances back in Britain:

The Distin family, have been successful at Exeter and Weymouth. Mr. and Mrs. Millar of Bath, and Miss M. O’Connor have been aiding them with their vocal powers.

May 22nd Distin performance in Western Literary Institution, Mr. Jarrett's concerts. The Distin family appeared among numerous other artists conducted by Mr. Howard Glover and Mr. Henry Wylde.

May 22nd Advert

Mrs. Anderson's grand concert – Mrs. Anderson has the great honour to announce that her Annual Grand Morning Concert will take place in the Opera Concert Room this day May 22, at half past 1 o'clock. Vocal and instrumental performers… Sax Horns, the Messrs. Distin, ….
1846 May 23rd Review

Mrs Anderson’s concert – This annual entertainment took place yesterday morning, and as it well deserved, was attended by a crowded audience. In a case like this, where all the performers did their utmost to promote the morning’s amusement, it is almost invidious to particularize, but the following pieces out of the remarkably well-chosen programme called forth universal admiration…Then came a beautiful fantasia on themes from the Huguenots by the Messrs. Distin, and the first part was over….,364

1846 May 24th Advert:

Mr Distin and his four sons, will contribute their unrivalled performances on the Saxe Horns.365

1846 May 26th Distin performance in Sadler’s Wells, London.

The Distin family among numerous other artists.366

1846 May. Distin performance.

Messrs. Distin, who performed a beautiful fantasia from ‘Les Huguenots’ on Sax horns.367

1846 May. Advert for June 15th Distin performance.368

1846 June 1st Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms, London, Miss B. Hawes’ concert.369

1846 June 3rd Advert

Madame Dulcken, pianist to Her Majesty, begs to announce that her annual morning concert will take place on Friday, June 5, at the Great Concert Room of Her Majesty's theatre… Instrumental performers:…The Sax Horns by the Distin Family. Conductor, M. Benedict…370

1846 June. Distin performance with Misses Pyne, London.371

1846 June 5th Distin performance in Concert Room of Her Majesty's Theatre, Madame Dulcken’s "monster" annual concert.372

1846 June 8th Distin performance in Princess Concert rooms, London, Mr. Chatterton’s annual concert.373

1846 June 15th Distin performance in Opera concert room, Mr. Benedict’s annual morning concert.374

364 The Times, May 23rd 1846.
365 The Era, May 24th 1846.
366 Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, May 31st 1846.
367 The Era, May 31st 1846.
368 Ibid.
369 The English Gentleman, June 6th 1846 p.5.
370 The Times, June 3rd 1846.
372 Ibid., p. 327.
373 Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, June 14th 1846.
374 The Musical World, June 1845 p.271.
1846 June 16th Review

Mr. Benedict's concert – The concert of Mr Benedict, which took place yesterday morning, in the Music Room of Her Majesty’s Theatre, attracted as usual, the most crowded and brilliant audience of the season. It would greatly outstep our limits to attempt anything like a detailed analysis of the programme, the mere catalogue of names will demonstrate the nature of the materials of which it was composed...the instrumental department of the programme was no less strong than the vocal. It comprised a couple of quintets for the sax-horns, by the Distin family...375

1846 June 17th Review:

Miss and Master Day – The concert of these young artists took place yesterday morning at the Hanover Square Rooms, before a very full audience...A quartet for four violins by Maurer, capably executed by MM. Sivori, Sainton, Willy and Day; a violincello solo by Herr Kellerman, and a fantasie on the saxhorns by the Distin family made up the instrumental department of the programme...376

1846 June 18th Distin performance.

Asylum for aged and decayed Freemasons – The anniversary dinner of the members of the craft and the friends and the patrons of Masonry took place yesterday,... the musical arrangements were more than usually good; ... there were present Mr Distin and his sons,...377

1846 June 19th Distin performance in Freemasons’ Hall, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Innfields, annual dinner in aid of the Aged Freemasons.378

1846 June 20th Distin performance in Concert at Sadler’s Wells379 380 381

Sadler’s Wells:- The Distins (the original Sax Horns) will give a Grand Evening Concert on Tuesday, June 20th. Tickets may be had of the Messrs. Distin, at the sax horn depot, 43, Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square.

1846 June 22nd Distin performance in Willis Room, London, Madame Sala's morning concert.382

This lady will give her annual morning concert on Monday 22nd June, to commence at 2 o’clock, at Willis’s Rooms. ........The instrumentalists are the Messrs. Distin.......383

The Distin Family on the Sax Horns384

1846 June Distin performances in Rochester, Chatham, Exeter.385

1846 June 30th Distin performance in Theatre, Portsmouth.386

375 The Times, June 16th 1846.
376 Ibid., June 17th 1846.
377 Ibid., June 18th 1846.
378 Jackson’s Oxford Journal, June 20th 1846.
379 The Times, June 26th p. 4.
380 The Era, June 28th 1848.
382 The Era, June 21st 1846.
383 The Observer, June 14th 1846.
384 The Era, June 21st 1846.
385 Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, July 19th 1846.
Appendix A

1846  July 1st. Distin performance in Hanover-Square Rooms, Mdlle. Judine’s concert.\textsuperscript{387,388}

MDLLE. JUDINE’S concert takes place on Wednesday evening, July 1st, at the Hanover-square Rooms, on which occasion Madame Caradori Allan, Madame Anna Thillon, Miss M. B. Hawes, Heir Pischek, and John Parry, with a host of talent, will appear. Moscheles, Sivori, and the Distin Family, are amongst the instrumentalists.

1846  July 12th Distins perform at The Queen’s Theatre\textsuperscript{389}

Mr. Sedgwick announced his annual concert for Tuesday evening next at Blagrove’s Concert Rooms. The peculiar attractions of the evening will be a quartett for concertinas and the performances on the sax horns by the Distin family.

1846  July. Distin performance in Rochester, Chatham, Exeter.\textsuperscript{390}

1846  July. Distin performance in Sadler’s Wells, London.\textsuperscript{391}

1846  August 4th Distin performance in Royal Surrey Gardens

Monster fête and grand Neapolitan carnival, Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens,… The first performance on this side of the water of the Distin family, the celebrated performers on the Sax Horns…\textsuperscript{392}

1846  August 7th Distin performance in Guildford.\textsuperscript{393}

1846  August 11th Distin performance at the Surrey Zoological Gardens.

the performances of those very clever persons called ‘The Distin family,’ …\textsuperscript{394}

Then the Distin family blew, as with one breath, the melodious qui\textsuperscript{395}

1846  August. Distin performances in Exeter, Bath\textsuperscript{396} and Guilford.\textsuperscript{397}

1846  September. Distin performance in Zoological Gardens, Liverpool.\textsuperscript{398,399}

1846  September. Distin performance in Colchester.\textsuperscript{400}

1846  September 14th & 15th Distin performances in Ipswich.\textsuperscript{401}

\textsuperscript{386} Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, July 4th 1846.
\textsuperscript{387} The Theatrical Times, June 3rd 1846 p.22.
\textsuperscript{388} The Theatrical Times, April 1846.
\textsuperscript{389} The Observer, July 12th 1846.
\textsuperscript{390} Lloyd’s Weekly London Newspaper, July 19th 1846.
\textsuperscript{391} The Musical World, July 1846 p.315.
\textsuperscript{392} The Times, August 4th 1846.
\textsuperscript{393} The Musical World, August 1846, p.398.
\textsuperscript{394} The Times, August 11th 1846.
\textsuperscript{395} The Era, August 16th 1846.
\textsuperscript{396} The Theatrical Times, August 9th 1846 p.72.
\textsuperscript{397} The Musical World, August 1846 p.398.
\textsuperscript{398} Liverpool Mercury, August 28th 1846.
\textsuperscript{399} The Musical World, September 1846 p.438.
\textsuperscript{400} The Ipswich Journal, July 11th 1846.
Appendix A

1846 September 16th Distin performance in Woodbridge.  
1846 September 21st & 23rd Distin performances in Cheltenham.  
1846 September 26th Distin performances in Bristol Theatre.  
1846 September 27th Distin performance in Clifton.  

1846 November 4th Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre

Lyceum Theatre – Mr Allcroft has the honour to announce his intention of giving a series of vocal and instrumental promenade concerts, to commence on Monday 16th November and to be continued every evening for one month only. The orchestra will consist of 89 first rate artists, in addition to which the eminent vocalists Mr Henry Russell and Mr Sinclair will appear every evening, also those celebrated artists the Distin Family, whose performances on the sax horns have been the theme of admiration through all the Courts of Europe.

1846 November 12th Advertisement under 'Lost and Found' in The Times

Lost, yesterday morning (Wednesday) between the Strand and Albany Street, Regents Park, a small roll of manuscript music of no use but to the owner. The finder will be rewarded on bringing it to Messrs. Distin and Sons, 31 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square.

1846 November. Distin performance in Mr. Allcrofts’ Promenade Concerts, Lyceum.

The Lyceum Theatre opens tomorrow (Monday) with a very attractive entertainment in the shape of vocal and instrumental promenade concerts, for four weeks, and, according to the announcements, will be of a very attractive order. Mr Allcroft, who is the speculator, seems determined to spare no expense in giving his patrons a varied and good entertainment. We perceive by the bills and advertisements that he has secured a first-rate orchestra, to consist of eighty professors, .... also Mr. Distin and his four sons, better known as the Distin family, whose extraordinary performances on the saxhorns have delighted so many of the crowned heads of Europe.....

1846 November Distin performances at the Lyceum Theatre, London at Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts

The Distin Family, whose performances on the sax horns have been the theme of admiration through all the Courts of Europe.

401 The Ipswich Journal, 11th July 1846. 
402 Ibid.,
404 Ibid.,
405 Ibid.,
406 Ibid.,
407 The Times, 4th November 1846.
408 Ibid.,
409 The Observer, November 15th 1846.
410 The Times November 4th & 5th 1846 p.2.
The programme included solos on Alto-Sax horn and Sax tromba played by Henry Distin and John Distin played a trumpet solo, *Fantasia.*\(^{411}\) The programme for November 24\(^{th}\) included a Quintette, *Distin’s Military Quadrille* and John Distin played a trumpet solo, *Fantasia.* Mr Negri conducted the supporting orchestra.\(^ {412} \)\(^ {413}\)

1846 November 16th. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Grand Promenade Concerts. The programme\(^ {414}\) included a sax tromba solo by Mr H Distin and *A Soldier Tired* solo trumpet Mr Distin.

Mr H Distin was much applauded in a solo on the sax tromba, an instrument of the saxhorn family. Mr Distin was encored in a solo on the trumpet, and well merited the compliment…\(^ {415}\)

1846 November 18th. Distin performances at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Grand Promenade Concerts. This evening Wednesday November 18\(^{th}\). Programme:… Solo Alto Sax horn Mr Henry Distin,…Fantasia, trumpet Mr Distin….. Solo sax tromba Mr. Henry Distin…\(^ {416}\)

1846 November 20th. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre - Mr. Allcroft’s Vocal and Instrumental Promenade Concerts. This evening Friday November 20\(^{th}\). Programme:… Polka Victoria and Albert. Solo alto sax horn Mr Henry Distin,…\(^ {417}\)

1846 November 22\(^{nd}\) Advert for Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts featuring the Distins.\(^ {418}\)

1846 November 22\(^{nd}\) Advert for Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts featuring the Distins.\(^ {419}\)

The Distin family, as is the case invariably, played deliciously on their Sax-horns. Mr. H. Distin gaining special renown in a solo on the Sax-tromba.

1846 November 24\(^{th}\) Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Vocal and Instrumental Promenade Concerts. Last five nights…Quintette, Mr Distin and and his four sons on the Sax horns… Distins’s New Military Quadrille… Fantasia, trumpet Mr Distin…\(^ {420}\)

1846 November 26th. Distin performance at the Lyceum Theatre. Distin’s military quadrille, performed by Messrs. Distin and full orchestra, now rightly most enthusiastically encored at Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts at the Lyceum Theatre, is published for

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\(^{411}\) *The Times*, November 18\(^{th}\) 1846 p.4.  
\(^{412}\) Ibid., November 24\(^{th}\) 1846 p.4.  
\(^{413}\) Ibid., November 20\(^{th}\) 1846.  
\(^{414}\) Ibid., November 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) 1846.  
\(^{415}\) Ibid., November 1846.  
\(^{416}\) *The Times*, November 18\(^{th}\) 1846.  
\(^{417}\) Ibid., November 20\(^{th}\) 1846.  
\(^{418}\) *The Era*, November 22\(^{nd}\) 1846.  
\(^{419}\) Ibid..  
\(^{420}\) *The Times*, November 24\(^{th}\) 1846.
the pianoforte by Distin and Sons, and may be had at their music and musical instrument establishment, 31 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, price 3s....

1846 November 26th. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.

An Operatic Selection from Robert the Devil by Mr. Distin and his four sons on the Silver Sax horns, Distin’s Grand Military Quadrille and Henry Distin playing a Sax horn solo.

1846 November 27th. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.

An Operatic Selection from Les Hugenots by Mr. Distin and his four sons on the Silver Sax horns, a Military Quadrille and Mr H. Distin playing a Sax horn solo.

1846 November 28th. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre- Mr. Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.

Operatic Selection from Robert the Devil by Mr Distin and his four sons on the Silver Sax horns… Distin’s New Military Quadrille…Operatic Selections from Don Juan, Solo Trumpet Mr Distin…

1846 November. Distin performance at Lyceum Theatre

On Monday evening these musical entertainments commenced at this theatre. Upwards of eighty English performers from the opera, Ancient Concerts, and Philharmonic Society make up the highly efficient band organized by Mr. Allcroft; in addition there are the powerful attractions of Mr. Henry Russell, and the Distin family; the whole is conducted by Mr. Negri. The theatre presents a very pleasing appearance, and the general arrangements are of a very superior order.

1846 November. Distins perform at the Lyceum Theatre

On Monday night was the first of the series of promenade concerts at this theatre, under the management of Mr Allcroft. The band is selected from amongst our best instrumentalists, and the selection of pieces marked by irreproachable judgment and taste..... The “Distin Family” played airs on the Sax instruments very admirably..

1846 November. Distin performance in Mr. Allcrofts’ Promenade Concerts. Lyceum.

These attractive entertainments are nightly crowded. The Messrs Distin have been re-engaged and are welcomed each evening in most of their popular performances; the entire arrangements appears to give general satisfaction, and we trust that Mr. Allcroft has had no occasion to complain of any want of support in his undertaking. His efforts have been untiring, and he deserves to meet with success.

421 The Times, November 26th 1846.
422 Ibid.,
423 Ibid., November 27th 1846.
424 The Era, November 29th 1846.
425 The Times, November 26th 1846 also November 30th, December 1st, December 8th
426 Theatrical Times, Saturday November 28th 1846.
427 The Observer, November 23rd 1846.
428 Theatrical Times, Saturday November 28th 1846.
1846 November. Distin performance in Mr. Allcrofts’ Promenade Concerts. Lyceum. Distin by their splendid performance on the sax-horns have enhanced the attractions of these concerts, which are certainly superior to anything of the kind that has yet been produced.

1846 December. George became seriously affected by an ear infection.

1846 December 1st Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts. The programme included an Operatic Selection from William Tell and Distin’s Military Quadrille. The Distin brothers also sang duets and trios.

1846 December 3rd Distins performed at Arundel Castle at the invitation of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk for the Grand Fete to Her Majesty the Queen Dowager at Whitney- “and nearly all the continental courts”

Her Majesty and Prince Albert have just arrived at Arundel Castle… the far-famed Ethiopian serenaders and the Distin Family are engaged to perform before the guests…

Departure Of The Queen And Prince Albert On A Visit To The Duke Of Norfolk. After planting the trees, the royal party proceeded to the church and collegiate chapel, when, after expressing their gratification to their host and his lady, they left Petworth, and returned to Arundel Castle. The Distin family, the well-known performers on the sax-horns, were introduced in the evening, and had the honour to play a selection of their favourite pieces to the royal circle.

1846 December 4th Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts. Lyceum Theatre, Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts, Last Week but one this evening Friday December 4th …. Selection Fidelio on the Sax horns, by Mr Distin and his four sons….. Distin’s Military Quadrille…… Quintette on the Sax horns by Mr Distin and his four sons…

The Distin family performed their favourite airs on the Sax horns, much to the gratification of the company; and a very young lady, Miss Kate Loder (a relative of the composer) distinguished herself in a brilliant fantasia on the pianoforte composed by Doehler, on airs from Guillaume Tell. Her Majesty was so pleased with the performances of the Distin family that she commanded a repetition of one of the three airs after the whole had been concluded…

1846 December 9th Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts. Lyceum Theatre, Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts, Last Night but five this evening, Wednesday December 9…. Selection from Guillaume Tell on the Sax horns by Mr. Distin and his four sons…. Distin’s Military Quadrille…. Cheerfulness by Mr Messrs H., W. and T. Distin …

1846 December 11th. Advertisement in The Times:

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429 Theatrical Times, Saturday November 28th 1846.
430 Death Certificate.
431 The Times, December 1st 1846 p.4.
433 The Times, December 2nd 1846.
434 The Observer, December 7th 1846.
435 The Times, December 4th 1846.
436 Ibid.,
437 Ibid., December 9th 1846.
Distin’s Military Quadrille, second edition, is now published for the pianoforte. By Distin & Sons at their Musical establishment, 31 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, price 3s... Distin’s cornet a piston, in case £6 6s... The cornet a piston taught by Messrs. Distin - terms, £3 3s per quarter. A drawing of the instrument forwarded on receipt of two postage stamps.  

1846 December 12th. Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.  

Lyceum Theatre, Promenade Concerts, Last Night but Two this evening, Saturday December 12th... Selection from Lucia di Lammermoor by Mr. Distin and his four sons on the Sax horns.... Quadrille Military.... Fantasia, Trumpet, Mr Distin....  

1846 December. Distin performance.  

Weippert’s Soirees Dansantes (including Mr. Distin and his four sons for the Military Quadrille)  

1846 December 14th. Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.  

Lyceum Theatre, Promenade Concerts, Last Night but One this evening, December 14th.... Operatic Selection from Les Hugenots by Mr Distin and his four sons on the Sax horns... Quadrille Military... Solo, Sax horn, Mr. H. Distin.....  

1846 December 15th. Advertisement in The Times:  

Distin’s Military Quadrille, second edition, is now published for pianoforte by Distin and Sons, at their musical establishment, 31, Cranbourne-street, Leicester-square, price 3s.; cornet and flute accompaniments, 1s. extra. A large assortment of sax horns, sax trombas, sax cornets, &c. as performed on by Messrs. Distin, on five occasions, before Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and lastly at Arundel Castle on Thursday, Dec. 3rd 1846. Distin’s cornet à pistons, in case £6 6s.; Distin’s eight-keyed cocoa flutes, £2 2s. The cornet à piston taught by Messrs. Distin- terms, £3 3s. per quarter. A drawing of the instrument forwarded on receipt of two postage stamps.  

1846 December 15th. Distin performance in Lyceum Theatre- Mr Allcroft’s Promenade Concerts.  

Lyceum Theatre, Promenade Concerts, Last Night this evening December 15th, Mr Allcroft’s benefit  

Part 1 – Overture William Tell, Polka Elfe, Operatic Selection from Robert the Devil by Mr Distin and his four sons on the Sax horns, ... Quadrille Military, ....  

Part 2 – Overture Oberon, Ballad, Mr Sinclair, Trio, The Turner Family, Quartette on the Sax Tubas, Messrs. Distin....  

1847 January 5th Distin performance in Cavendish Square, London.  

Blagrove’s Concert Rooms, 71 Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square  

438 The Times, December 11th 1846.  
439 The Times, December 12th 1846.  
440 The Era, December 13th 1846.  
441 The Times, December 14th 1846.  
442 The Times, December 15th 1846 p.9.  
443 The Times, December 15th 1846.
Mr J. L. Downe, principal flautist of the Italian Opera, New Orleans, begs respectfully to announce that his concert will take place at the above Rooms this evening…Tickets to be had at Keith, Prowse & Co’s, 48 Cheapside, Distin and Son’s, Cranbourn Street,…

Queens’s Concert Rooms, Hanover Square

Grand Evening Concert in Aid of the Funds of the Western Ophthalmic Institution, on Friday January 8th….Instrumental performers….Solo trumpet, Mr Distin, solo sax horn and sax tromba, Mr H Distin, Sax horns and sax tubas, the Messrs. Distin

1847 January 17th Distin performance in Music-Hall, Store Street.

Messrs. Distin, professors of the sax-horns, sax-tubas, and sax-trombas, &c., also lent their valuable assistance. The programme was one-third too long, but was otherwise varied and effective.

1847 January 27th Distin performance in Music-Hall, Store Street, Bedford Square

Mr Turner begs to invite the attention of his pupils, friends and the public to the following excellent army of talent for his sixteenth annual concert to take place at the above hall this evening….Vocal and instrumental performers… also Mr Distin and his four sons….

1847 January 28th Distin performance in Music-Hall, Store Street, Bedford Square

Mr Turner gave his 16th Annual Concert last night, which attracted a very full audience…. The Messrs. Distin, professors of the sax-horns, and sax-trombas, &c., also lent their valuable assistance…

1847 January, Distin performance in Salisbury subscription concerts.

1847 January 25th Distin performance in Lecture Hall, Greenwich assisted by Amelia Hill (voice).

1847 January 28th Distin performance in Town Hall, Birmingham.

1847 January 30th Distin performance in Leamington.

1847 February 1st Distin performance in Coventry.

1847 February 3rd Distin performance in Cambridge.

1847 February 4th Distin performance in Oxford. The Distin family with Madame Bishop.

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444 The Times, January 5th 1847.
445 The Times, January 5th 1847, also 6th, 7th 8th
446 The Times, January 16th 1847 p.4.
447 The Times, January 28th 1847.
449 The Musical World, January 1847 p.28.
450 Ibid.,
451 Ibid.,
452 Ibid...
453 Ibid...
454 Ibid.
1847  February 5th Distin performance in Greenwich. 455

1847  February 8th Distin performance in Hanley. 456

1847  February 9th Distin performance in Burslem. 457

1847  February 10th Distin performance in Longton. 458

1847  February 11th Distin performance in Newcastle-under-Lyme. 459

1847  February 12th Distin performance in Stoke. 460

1847  February 15th Distin performance in Assembly Rooms, Hackney.

  Vocalists, Miss Loder, Miss O’Connor. Pianoforte, Miss Baynes. 461

  Mr Distin and his four sons, the original and unrivalled performers on the Sax Horns and Sax Tubas, will give their popular concerts at the Assembly Rooms, Hackney, this evening.

1847  February 18th Distin performance in Manor Rooms, Stoke Newington. 462 463

1847  February 19th Distin performance in Horns Tavern, Kensington. 464

1847  March 5th Distin performance in a Scottish Concert in Hanover Square Rooms, London.

  The Distins performed a prelude on Caledonian airs. At the same concert appeared: Messrs. Sinclair, Borrani, Burdini, J. A. Novello, Signor Brizzi, with Madame G. Macfarren, Misses Bassano, Dolby, Rainforth, Sarah Flower, P. Horton, M. O’Connor, and Misses Williams (voice). The instrumental performers consisted of Monsieur Sainton (violin), Madame Dulcken (piano), and F. Chatterton (harp). 465

1847  March 12th Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms, London.

  The Distin family, Madame Dulcken, M. Sainton, Mr. Frederick Chatterton, and others. 466

1847  March 15th Distin performance in Crosby Halls, London. 467

1847  March 22nd Distin performance in Literary Institute, Croydon. 468

455 Ibid.,
456 Ibid.,
457 Ibid.,
458 Ibid.,
459 Ibid.,
460 Ibid.,
461 Ibid.,
462 Ibid.,
465 Ibid.,
466 Ibid., March 1847, pp. 157-158.
467 The Aberdeen Journal, March 17th 1847.
468 The Morning Chronicle, March 15th 1847.
469 The Times, March 17th & 18th 1847 p.1.
1847 March 23rd Distin performance in Horns, Kennington with M. O’Connor, E. Loder (voice), W. S. Rockstro (piano), Miss Baynes (piano accompaniment).

The Distins, the original and only performers on the sax horns and sax tubas will give their highly attractive and popular concert. 478

1847 March 28th Distin performances in Manchester Theatre Royal. Distins gave four concerts with Moriatt O’Connor (voice). 471

Distins will play on their Sax-horns and Sax-trombas. Reports speak in high terms of their performance, and the testimonials from Marschner and Meyerbeer are a guarantee of their excellence. 472

1847 April. Distin performance in Manchester Theatre Royal 473

The Distin family gave four concerts this last week at this establishment with great success.

1847 April. Advert.

Jenny Lind.- Just published, eight of the celebrated Swedish melodies, as really sung by Mdlle. Jenny Lind, published for the Cornopean, Sax Horn, or Sax Tuba, by Distin and Sons, at their musical repository, 31, Cranbourn street, Leicester square. …Distins’ new cornet mouthpieces, as used by themselves, 3s 6d.; per post. 4d.: Distin’s cornets, three, four, and six guineas: the real Courtois, eight guineas. Distins’ registered Sax horn and Sax tubas. Drawing sent for two stamps. 474

1847 May. Distin performance in Covent Garden, London.

The Distin family, who played charmingly on their Sax-horns. 475

1847 May 21st Distin performance in Queen's Concert Room, Hanover Square, Mr. John Parry's annual concert. 476

1847 May 26th Distin performance in Freemason's Tavern, London, for the Covent Garden theatrical fund with Hungarian vocalists, Miss Bassano, Miss Williams, Miss Isaacs. 477

1847 May Distin performances in Dublin. 478

1847 June. Distin performance in Hanover-Square Rooms, Mr. and Mrs. Seguin's morning concert. 479

1847 June 11th Distin performance in M. Benedict's Concert, Concert Room of Her Majesty's Theatre. 480

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469 The Times, March 17th & 18th 1847 p.1.
471 Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, June 1847 p.95.
472 The Era, March 28th 1847.
473 The Theatrical Times, April 1847.
474 The Times, April 30th 1847 p.1.
475 The Era, May 30th 1847.
476 The Morning Chronicle, May 22nd 1847.
479 Fine Arts Journal, June 1847 p.507.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1847 June 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in Freemason's Hall, London (12th annual Asylum festival). Concert with Blewitt, Misses Turner, J. O. Atkins, Brizzi, Binge, Turner, and Jolley’s pupils. 481</td>
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<td>1847 June 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand with Miss Dolby, the veteran Braham. 482</td>
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<td>1847</td>
<td>Distin performance in Manchester celebrated ten years of successful concerts and received highly favourable and complimentary reviews.</td>
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<td>1847 July 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in Northampton at the Annual Country Meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, South- Midland District.</td>
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<td>1847 July 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in New Hall, Newland with Mr. Klitz. 483</td>
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<td>1847 August 16&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in the Theatre, Leicester with Moriatt O’Connor (voice), and Mr. Willy (piano) 484</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847 August 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in Mansion House, Louth with Moriatt O’Connor (voice), and Mr. Willy (piano). 485</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847 August 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Distin performance in Vauxhall Gardens, London, for the benefit of the Western institution for diseases of the eye. 486-487</td>
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<td><strong>A Grand Gala In Aid Of The Funds Of The Western Ophthalmic Institution. When in addition to the Varied and Attractive Programme, those Distinguished Artistes, THE DISTIN FAMILY, Will have the honor of making their 1st Appearance, (having given their GRATUITOUS SERVICES) and perform on the SAX HORMS, which were presented to them by LOUIS PHILIPPE, King of the French.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1847 August</td>
<td>Distin performance in Jersey, Guernsey, Southampton, the Isle of Wight, etc. 488</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847 September</td>
<td>Distin performance in Guernsey Assembly Rooms.</td>
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<td>The performance of the various pieces was worthy of the compositions; but we are bound in justice to go farther- for the extraordinary brilliancy, power and correctness of the Messrs, Distins’ sax-horns and sax-tubas, an effect was given to the several pieces which even their authors could not have contemplated...all [the pieces] were admirable and excellent. We must, however, record our sense of the exquisite effect of the quintettes, in which were given the music of several glee and other vocal pieces. 489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847 September</td>
<td>Distin performance in Vauxhall gardens. 490</td>
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</tbody>
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480 *Fine Arts Journal*, June 1847 p.525.
482 *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, June 26<sup>th</sup> 1847.
483 *The Derby Mercury*, July 28<sup>th</sup> 1847.
484 *The Musical World*, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1847 p.545.
485 *The Hall Packet and East Riding Times*, August 20<sup>th</sup> 1847.
486 *The Morning Chronicle*, August 24<sup>th</sup> 1847.
487 *Vauxhall Gardens Archive*: Bound volume of bills, etc, 1845-1851 (Volume 3 of 6).
488 *The Era*, August 29<sup>th</sup> 1847.
489 *The Era*, September 26<sup>th</sup> 1847.
1847 September. Distin performance in Boulogne, France with Miss Pyne (voice) and Miss O'Connor (voice), and Mr. Willy, jun. (piano).  

1847 September 30th Advert in The Times:  

Distin and Sons’ Musical Repository, 31, Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square. – The only house in London for Distin’s Patent Sax Horns and Sax Tubas. The public are cautioned against spurious imitations advertised under the head of cheapness at many houses, they are utterly useless. Distin’s cornet six guineas. Distin’s cornet, six guineas; the genuine Courtois, eight ditta. Distin’s clarionets (sic), flutes and instruments of every description. Drawings and explanations transmitted for two stamps. Now publishing, Distin’s Cornet and Sax-Horn Tutor; containing the art of single and double tonguing (sic), and a variety of exercises, airs and duets. Price 6s. This will be found the most complete ever published.  


Mr Distin and his sons have given performances on the Sax-horns at several towns in the north of England, and have proceeded to Scotland.  

1847 October 28th & 30th Distin performance in City Hall, Glasgow with Miss O’Connor (voice), and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1847 November 9th Distin performance in Music Hall, Edinburgh with Miss O’Connor (voice).  

1847 November 17th Distin performance in Liverpool with Mrs. Wood & Miss Withall.  

The most exquisite pleasures of the evening were imparted by the Distin family, whom we were glad to have an opportunity of hearing once again. Anything more stirring than Mr. Distin’s trumpet solo, it is impossible to conceive; anything more delightful, more perfect, in the way of performance on brazen (or, we believe we ought to say, silver) instruments than the combined efforts of himself and his sons will assuredly never be realized. Mr. Distin’s fantasia on the trumpet, ’The Soldier Tired,’ is an effort of the highest merit, wonderful in point of execution, considering that by the lip alone is it all performed, and possessing superadded beauties of tone and expression that render it surprisingly brilliant and effective. The quintette on Donizetti’s composition was a remarkably fine performance and was loudly applauded.  

1847 November 27th Distin performance in Liverpool, Saturday evening concerts.  

1847 December. Distin performance advertised  

The Distins, the original performers on the Sax Horns and Sax Tubas, have arrived in town for the season… Distin and Son’ musical repository, 31, Cranbourn street, Leicester square, the only house in London for Distin’ Patent Sax Horns and Sax Tubas. ..All instruments proved in the  

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491 Theatrical Journal, September 1847 p.303.  
492 The Times, September 30th 1847 p.9.  
493 The Era, October 24th 1847.  
494 Glasgow Herald, October 11th 1847.  
495 The Scotsman, November 10th 1845 p.2.  
496 Liverpool Mercury, November 12th 1847.  
497 The Era, November 28th 1847.  
498 Liverpool Mercury, November 26th 1847.
presence of the purchaser by M. Distin and his Sons. Messieurs Distin will resume their teaching
the Cornet and Sax Horns, 3 guineas per quarter. 499

1848 January 3rd & 10th Distin performance in Exeter Hall 500 501

Exeter Hall - Mr Henry Smith’s First Grand Concert will take place on Monday evening January
10th, on which occasion he has the pleasure to inform his friends and the public he will be
supported by the following extraordinary combination of talent.…. Trumpet Mr Distin, Sax Horns
and Sax tubas Mr Distin and his four sons…. ’Now ready, No1 of Distin’s Journal for Cornet and Pianoforte, price 2s 6d. Distin’s Tutor, 6s.’

1848 January 11th Distin performance in Southwark Institution

1848 January 13th Distin performances in Beaumont Institution 502

1848 January 14th Distin performance in Croydon Literary Institution with Misses Pyne, M.
O’Connor, M. Guerrier, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Willy jun. as the conductor. 503

The harmonies produced by those novel instruments, the silver sax-horns, are the most perfect
imaginable…The opening piece was Rossini’s ’Cujos Animam’ which with the quintette, ’Sulla
Tomba,’ were highly applauded.

1848 January 20th Distin performance in Beaumont Institution (5th concert) with Madame
Thillon. 504

1848 January 26th 505 506 Distin performance in Store Street, London.

DISTIN and Sons will PERFORM on the SAX HORNS and SAX TUBAS at the Music-hall,
Store-street, on Wednesday, January 26. Distin’s patent sax horns, as used by them-selves, to be

499 The Times, December 13th 1847 p.3.
500 The Times, January 3rd 1848.
501 The Times, January 10th 1848 p.1.
503 The Musical World, January 15th 1848 p.45.
504 The Musical World, January 15th 1848 p.45.
505 The Times, January 17th 1848 p.1.
had only at their repository, 31, Cranbourn-street, Leicester–square. Now ready, No1 of Distin’s Journal, price 2s 6d. Distin’s Tutor, 6s.

1848 January 27th Distin performance in Arundel Castle. 507

The Duchess of Norfolk gave an assembly here, at which the Messrs. Distin were engaged to appear, and their performance was greatly admired and applauded by a brilliant assemblage. 508

1848 January 27th. Theodore Distin was a vocal soloist in a concert at Bridge House Hotel. 509

1848 Banbury. 510 Distin performance in the British School Room, Crouch Street, Banbury.

1848 February 15th Distin performance in Drury Lane, Mr. Allcroft’s Concert. 511 Plus:

Distins Patent Sax Horns, as used by themselves, to be had only at their Repository, 31, Cranbourn Street. A case of new Besson Cornet just arrived. Distin’s new Ventil Cornet requires no crooks: the real Courtois, eight guineas. 512

1848 February. Distin performances in St. Albans, Hertford, Bishop’s Stortford, Bamtree, Chelmsford & Greenwich. 513

1848 February 29th Distin performance in Exeter Hall.

Distin and his four Sons, who will introduce (for the first time) a new set of instruments called Distins’ Ventil Trombones. 514

1848 March 3rd Distin performance in Chelmsford with Moriat O’Connor (voice), and Mr. Smith (piano). 515

1848 March. Distin performance in Stortford. 516

1848 March 27th Distin performance in Princess’ Concert Rooms, London, Miss Moriatt O’Connor’s concert with Miss M. O’Connor, the vocalists: Mrs. Weiss, Misses Pyne, Sara Flower, Ellen Lyon, Cubitt, Mr. Weiss, N. J. Sporle, Barker, and John Parry. 517

1848 March. An advertisement in The Times:

Distin’s musical repository, 31, Cranbourne–street, Leicester- square. Distin’s patent sax horns; cornets by Courtois, Besson, Sax and all esteemed makers. Distin’s Tutor, 6s; Distin’s Journal, 1,2, 3, now ready. 518

507 The Lady’s Newspaper, January 27th 1848.
508 The Era, January 30th 1848.
509 The Times, January 1848.
510 From the Banbury Scrapbooks: Case F (1844-1932) oxfordshire.studies@oxfordshire.gov.uk
511 The Era, February 20th 1848.
514 The Times, February 24th 1848 p.1.
517 The Era, April 2nd 1848.
518 The Times, March 27th 1848 p.1.
1848  March 27\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Windsor.  
   Performance 'on the SAX HORNS and SAX TUBAS' Theatre Windsor.

1848  March 28\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Princess’s Consort Rooms

1848  March 29\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in High Wycombe

1848  March 30\textsuperscript{th} & 31\textsuperscript{st} Distin performances in Staines\textsuperscript{519}

1848  March. Distin performance in Princess’s Concert Rooms.
   We have seldom heard such perfect harmony combined with exquisite musical skill and taste as 
   they produce upon their newly-invented Sax Horns.\textsuperscript{520}

1848  April 4\textsuperscript{th} Distin performances in Olympic Theatre, Mr. Henry Russel's three grand 
   concerts.\textsuperscript{521}

   A Grand Concert by Mr Distin and his Four Sons, 'the original and unrivalled 
   performers on those extraordinary instruments, the sax-horns and sax tubas'

1848  April 4\textsuperscript{th} George Frederick Distin, died of an inflammation of the tympanum\textsuperscript{522} (age 30) 
   in 31, New Cranbourn Street, Long Acre, St. Martin in the Fields, Westminster, London, 
   Middlesex.\textsuperscript{523} The death certificate states that the informant was Elizabeth Hope, an 
   inmate who was present at death.

1848  April 17\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in London tavern Bishopsgate Street.\textsuperscript{524}

1848  April 18\textsuperscript{th} -20\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Olympic Theatre. Concerts for the Million.\textsuperscript{525}

1848  April 22\textsuperscript{nd} Distin performance report\textsuperscript{526}:
   This week Concerts Monstre have been given, Mr. Henry Russell presenting the principal portion 
   of his highly attractive entertainments aided by the Pyrenean Singers, the Distin Family, and a host 
   of vocal and instrumental talent. On the theatre re-opening we hope to see a few of those weeds, 
   the Would-Be's removed from the company.

1848  May 8\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Concert of the Society of Female Musicians.\textsuperscript{527}

1848  May 30\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms, Miss Dolby and 
   Mr. Lindsay Sloper's annual grand morning concert with Madame Anna 
   Thillon, Misses Wallace, Pyne, L. Pyne. Dolby and others.\textsuperscript{528}

\textsuperscript{519} The Times, March 27\textsuperscript{th} 1848 p.1.
\textsuperscript{520} The Era, April 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1848.
\textsuperscript{521} The Musical World, April 1848 p.270.
\textsuperscript{522} The middle ear.
\textsuperscript{523} Death Certificate.
\textsuperscript{524} The Era, April 19\textsuperscript{th} 1848.
\textsuperscript{525} Bell’s Life in London and Sporting Chronicle, April 16, 1848, p.2.
\textsuperscript{526} Theatrical Times, April 1848.
\textsuperscript{527} The Musical World, May 27\textsuperscript{th} 1848 p.344.
\textsuperscript{528} The Musical World, May 27\textsuperscript{th} 1845 p.351.
1848 June 9th Distin performance in Eyre Arms Tavern, St. John's Wood, Mr. Herbert's Lecture on sacred music.\(^{529}\)

1848 June 13th Distin performance in Banbury. The Distins' Sax-Horn Concerts.

1848 June 18th Distin performance at Princess’s Theatre\(^{530}\)

Benedict's concert, announced for the 27th inst (Monday week) offers one of the most ample and excellent programmes, which it is possible to imagine. There will be, it appears, at this entertainment, a combination of all the available musical talent at present in the metropolis – including Tadolini, Cruvelli, Schwartz, .........the Distin family.....

1848 June 19th Distin performance in the Great concert room of Her Majesty's Theatre, M. Benedict's morning concert.\(^{531}\)

1848 June 19th Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms by a quartet of Distins.\(^{532}\)

1848 June 20th Distin performance in John Parry's concert.\(^{533}\)

1848 June 21st Distin performance in Freemasons' Tavern, London, 13th anniversary festival of the aged freemasons' asylum with Mrs. Webb, Miss Hill, Miss Duval, Miss O'Connor, Signor Brizzi, Mr. Smith and Mr. Farren.\(^{534}\)

1848 June 23rd Ann Matilda Distin died\(^{535}\)\(^{536}\)

After a severe illness of 21 days, Ann Matilda Distin aged 57, wife of Mr. John Distin, the celebrated Sax-horn performer\(^{537}\)\(^{538}\) died of a carbuncle.

1848 June 29th Distin performance in Freemasons' Hall, London, concert for the benefit of the widow and family of the late Mr. Julian Kench.\(^{539}\)

1848 June. Distin performance in Olympic Theatre, concert for the aid of the London district letter carriers.\(^{540}\)

1848 August 16th Distin performance in Theatre Swansea.\(^{541}\)

1848 August. Distin performance in Bristol.\(^{542}\)

\(^{529}\) *The Musical World*, June 10th 1848 p.372.

\(^{530}\) *The Observer*, June 18th 1848.

\(^{531}\) *The Era*, June 18th 1848.

\(^{532}\) *The Times*, June 20th 1848 p.5.

\(^{533}\) *The Musical World*, June 24th 1848 p.408.

\(^{534}\) *The Era*, June 25th 1848.

\(^{535}\) *The Times*, June 24th 1848.

\(^{536}\) *The Manchester Guardian*, June 28th 1848.

\(^{537}\) *The Times*, June 24th 1848.

\(^{538}\) *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, July 1st 1848.

\(^{539}\) *The Era*, June 25th 1848.

\(^{540}\) *The Morning Chronicle*, June 30th 1848.

\(^{541}\) *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, August 20th 1848.

\(^{542}\) *The Musical World*, September 2nd 1848 p.572.
1848 October 9th Distin performance at a Grand Farewell Concert in Drury-Lane Theatre (which netted £500) and was attended by Queen Victoria and H.R.H. Prince Albert. Supporting were Miss Birch, Miss Bassano, Misses Williams, Ransford, and H. Phillips. Instrumentalists: Miss Kate Loder (piano), Miss Day (piano), Mr. Lindsay Sloper (piano), M. Benedict (piano), Mr. R. S. Pratten (flute), Mr. A. Sedgwick (concertina), Mr. Day (violin), Mr. Chatterton (harp). Conductors: M. Benedict, B. Richards, and Mr. H. Holmes.

Mr. Distin and Sons gave a farewell concert last night, previously to their departure for America, at Drury-Lane Theatre. The programme was a “bumper” one, divided into three parts, and comprising nearly forty pieces of music, vocal and instrumental. Of course it would be impossible to enter into a detailed notice of so extensive a performance, which was not over till midnight. We are happy to be able to state that at the period we were present the house was extremely well attended, the pit being quite full, the dress boxes nearly so, and a large proportion of the private boxes being occupied. Messrs. Distin experienced a very warm reception from their numerous admirers, and we trust will have weighty reasons to be gratified with the manner in which their invitation was responded to. Their wonderful performances on the Sax horns were loudly applauded, particularly the quartet “Soffriva nel pianto,” from Lucia di Lammermoor, which was extremely well given. Mr. Distin was encored in the “Soldier Tired,” which he performs on the trumpet in a manner which cannot well be surpassed; and Mr. Henry Distin received a similar honour for his performance on the Alto Sax horn of the scena “All is lost,” from the Sonnambula.

The same concert was reported in The Era October 15th.

Usual excellence,. artistes are extraordinary.

1848 October 27th a further Distin Farewell Concert, with Miss Moriatt O’Connor, Mr H. Distin, Mr W. Distin and Mr Theodore Distin, accompanied by Mr Willey (Junior)

543 The Musical World, October 14th 1848 p.663.
544 Morning Chronicle, October 10th 1848.
545 The Era, October 15th 1848.
Appendix A
1848 November 15th Distin performance in Assembly Rooms, Chichester with M. O’Connor (voice), and J. Willy (piano).\(^{546}\)

1848 November 27th Announcement in London Gazette 28th November 1848

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Co partnership between John Distin, Henry John Distin, William Alfred Distin, and Theodore Distin, of No. 31, Cranbourne-street, in the county of Middlesex, Music and Musical Instrument Sellers, under the style-or firm of Distin and Sons, was this day dissolved by- mutual consent.
-Dated this 27th day of November 1848

1848 December 13th Distin performance in Town Hall, Basingstoke with Miss Moriat O’Connor (voice) and Mr. John Willy (piano).\(^{547}\)

1848 December 14th Distin performance in Guildford, morning concert with Miss Moriat O’Connor (voice), Mr. John Willy (piano), and Mr. John Parry.\(^{548}\)

1848 December 16th Distins departed for America.\(^{549}\)
They decided to keep to their planned, yearlong tour to America, (which was scheduled to begin in June 1848 according to Langwill), and hastily rescored their repertory for brass quartet.\(^{550,551}\) William, who had been playing the flugel horn, took up the Bass Saxhorn\(^{552}\)

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\(^{546}\) Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, November 18th 1848.

\(^{547}\) The Musical World, December 23rd 1848 p.822 – 823.

\(^{548}\) Ibid.,

\(^{549}\) Ibid.,


\(^{552}\) Horwood, Wally, Adolphe Sax1814-1894 His life and Legacy (Herts.: Egon Pub. 1992).
So it was as a quartet that the Distin Family brass group travelled to USA where they had been offered $2,500 to give 40 concerts in the Old Park Theatre in New York.

**1849**

After a tempestuous ocean voyage they arrived in New York on 1st January 1849. Upon their arrival in New York they learnt that the Park Theatre had burnt down. They hastily made arrangements for a concert tour of the United States, “and had given one in Boston, for which they received $500 but Henry Distin developed Quincy, which laid him up at the Aston House for three months.”

The Boston Daily Evening Transcript reports: On January 1849 the Distins, “a family of brilliant Sax Horn virtuosos and singers who had just arrived from France and were making their American debut’ performed in a grand musical festival organised by the Boston Philharmonic Society. The concert was held in the Tremont Temple, Boston, USA and appearing with them was the orchestra of the Austrian orchestral conductor and composer Josef Gungl.

Unfortunately the group was advertised as “the original performers on the Sax Horns, John Willy was announced as their accompanist. They performed: Quartet: “Soffria nel pianto’ from Lucia by Donizetti, Henry Distin played alto saxhorn solos: “All is Lost Now’ and “Still So Gently’ from ‘Sonnambula’ by Bellini, the three brothers performed a trio for saxhorns by Costa and John Distin performed “The Soldier Tired’ by Arne.

The Distin family John, Henry, Theodore, William and also daughter Louise gave a performance in Baltimore on January 27th 1849 with the Germania Music Society Orchestra who were also on tour. For several months at the beginning of 1849, the Distin brass quartet travelled, with their Saxhorns, by stagecoach around America. On one occasion they were billed as circus riders. The advanced promotional material described the Distins not as performers on Sax Horns but on Six Horses! The heat, in the south, was “quite beyond anything in their experience or anticipation.

They played in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg. But by that time they had reached where the cholera prevailed to such an alarming extent that people had no thought of public amusements; reports met them constantly that the dreadful epidemic was worse further southward, and they then determined to give up their purpose of visiting New Orleans and returned to New York.

Arriving in New York they were engaged for a series of concerts from June 11th 1849, at the Castle Garden Summer ‘Promenade’ Concerts. Combined with the Germania Music Society Orchestra. The grand concert hall had been newly “fitted up’ by Messrs. French and Heiser and drew an audience of several thousand people. A local newspaper reports:

“They do not play upon the old horns, but upon a lovely instrument invented by a M. Sax, and called after the inventor. The tone is exquisite, and when the different qualities are combined, they produce the most delicious and ravishing harmony. The Distins are perfect masters of the instruments; they have sought and learned the very heart of their mystery, and they manage them with the most admirable tact. It is impossible to find fault with their performance, but we could fill a column in their praise. They exhibit in all they do the most refined taste; they throw into their...
playing deep feeling and beautiful expression, and they never fail in any passage whatsoever, as is the case with most brass instrument players. In short, they exhibit the greatest possible perfection in their art, and the instruments which are the vehicles of their expression are a character to delight and fascinate all who listen to them.\(^{563}\)

All looked flourishing for them, when suddenly, before they could give their second concert at Castle Garden, the Forrest-Macready riot broke out and all public amusements were for a time suspended.\(^{564}\) (In May 1849, when Macready was acting Macbeth in the Astor place opera house, the friends of Forrest hissed and interrupted the performance. The Astor place riot ensued, which resulted in the death of twenty-two men and the wounding of thirty-six others.)\(^{565}\)

A Baugnus poster published 7th September 1849, announced concerts to be given by the Distins at Brinley Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Canada was the next field in which the Distins tried their fortunes. John Distin’s cousin was William Langmead Distin (born 1786 and died 1879). He had moved to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1829 and became Mayor of Hamilton, Ontario in 1849. There may well be a connection.

Fate seemed against them at the outset, for immediately after they had scored one grand success in Montreal the concert hall was burned down before they could appear a second time, and there was no other place in which they could give a concert.\(^{566}\)

Scott states\(^{567}\): “From Montreal they gave concerts in Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton and other Canadian towns before returning to US in September. En route to the US the stagecoach, in which they were riding, broke down in the little village of Port Stanley causing them to miss the boat to Buffalo. The local blacksmith talked them into giving a concert in the village, which was held in a barn. It was well attended and netted the Distins $75. Concerts were given in Albany, Boston and New York and the Distins returned to England arriving in Liverpool on November 1849.\(^{568}\)

The success of the Distin Family, even as a brass quartet (i.e. not a quintet), was extraordinary and by ‘the 1850’s, the group had already given over 10,000 concerts!\(^{569}\)

1849 January 10th Distin performance in Tabernacle, New York.\(^{570}\)

1849 January-April Distin performance in Boston, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, Alexandria.\(^{571}\)

1849 April 25th Distin performance in Musical Hall, Chinese Buildings, New York.\(^{572}\)

1849 May 11th Distin performance in New York.

\(^{563}\) The British Bandsman, March 1889.

\(^{564}\) Ibid.,

\(^{565}\) http://famousamericans.net/edwinforrest/

\(^{566}\) The British Bandsman, March 1889.


\(^{570}\) Theatrical Journal, May 1849 p.164.

\(^{571}\) Ibid.,

\(^{572}\) Ibid.,
THE DISTINS IN NEW YORK
At the Apollo Saloon, on Thursday and Friday next – Mr Distin and his Sons, respectfully announce two grand Concerts, as above, on Thursday and Friday evenings, the 10th and 11th instant, when they will perform on their silver Sax Horns an admired fantasia on airs sung by Jenny Lind. The solo “All is Lost,” and the celebrated solo on the trumpet, “The Soldier Tired,” and the famous “Echo Hunting Duet,” on two French horns. Miss O’Connor will sing “The Last Rose of Summer,” and with Miss Distin and the Brothers, a “Glee,” without accompaniment, and several new Songs, Duets, Glees, etc. Pianist, Mr. Wiley. –
Tickets 80 cents each. Doors open at 7, concert to commence at 8 o’clock. Tickets may be had at the principal music stores, and of Corbyn and Martini, musical and dramatic agents, 4, Barclay Street, New York, May 10, 11.573

1849 May 22nd Distin performance at the Tabernacle, New York.574
1849 September Distin performance in Rochester.575
1849 September Distin performance in the Grand Musical Festival, Tabernacle, New York.576
1849 October 15th. Distins return from United States.

The Distins- These celebrated performers in the sax horns have returned from Canada and the United States. The Musical Instrument Business is now carried on by Henry Distin, at the depot, 31, Cranbourn street, Leicester Square, where an immense stock of sax horns, tubas, saxophones, cornets &c. by Besson, Courtois, and other makers, is always on sale; also Distin’s newly improved Cornet, with which beginners may produce a fine tone with great ease by the aid of Distin’s newly constructed mouthpiece.577

The British and North American royal mail steam-ship Europa, Captain Loft, reached the Mersey on Sunday fore-noon....... being six days later than those being brought by the American steam-ship Washington, from New York, arrived at Southampton on Saturday. The Europa, which accomplished the run in throughout in ten days and three-quarters, experienced very fine weather in crossing the Atlantic, but in her course up channel encountered strong gales from the eastward. The following is a list of the passengers brought by the Europa:- From Boston: ......Miss L. Distin, H. Distin, F. Distin, W. Distin, J. Distin......J. Willy.578

1849 November 1st & 2nd Distin performance in the Star Assembly Rooms, Oxford with Miss Louisa Distin, Miss Harriett O’Connor.579

First appearance since their return from America.580 581

1849 November 5th Distin performance in at the Albion Hall, Hammersmith
1849 November 6th Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Richmond
1849 November 7th Distin performance in Exeter Hall, London582

573 The Evening Post, New York, Friday May 11th 1849.
574 Liverpool Mercury, June 12th 1849.
575 The Era, September 30th 1849.
576 Spirit of the Times, September 15th 1849.
577 The Times, October 15th 1849 p.3.
578 The Manchester Guardian, October 10th 1849.
580 The Times, November 1st 1849 p.1.
581 The Era, November 11th 1849.
1849 November 9th Distin performance in Newbury
1849 November 12th Distin performance in Devizes
1849 November 13th Distin performance in Frome
1849 November 15th & 16th Distin performance in Exeter.\(^{583}\)
1849 November 20th Distin performance in Totnes
1849 November 22nd & 23rd Distin performance in Plymouth
1849 November 27th Distin performance in Wells
1849 November 29th Distin performance in Salisbury
1849 November 30th Distin performance in Winchester
1849 December 3rd Distin performance in Greenwich\(^{584}\)
1849 December 4th Distin performance in Beaumont Institute
1849 December 5th Distin performance in Exeter Hall, London.\(^{585}^{586}\)
1849 December 6th Distin performance in Hastings
1849 December 7th & 8th Distin performances in Brighton
Vocal soloists were Miss Moriatt O’Connor and Miss Distin. Pianist was John Willy
1849 Advertisement for Henry Distin’s Music Warehouse, 31, Cranbourn Street, Leicester-Square, London.

Drawings and prices of Sax Horns, Cornets, Saxophones, &c., to be had for two stamps. And for New mouthpieces, 3s 6d; plated, 6s.\(^{587}\)

1849 December 14th Distin performance in the Town Hall Birmingham with an audience of approximately 2,000 people.\(^{588}^{589}\)

1849 December 17th Distin performance in Maidenhead\(^{590}\)

1849 December 18th Distin performance in High Wycombe.\(^{591}\)

\(^{582}\) *The Era*, November 11th 1849.
\(^{583}\) Ibid., November 4th 1849.
\(^{584}\) Ibid., December 2nd 1849.
\(^{585}\) Ibid., November 18th 1849.
\(^{586}\) Ibid., December 1849, pp. 774-775.
\(^{587}\) Ibid., November 4th 1849.
\(^{588}\) Ibid., December 23rd 1849.
\(^{589}\) *The Era*, December 23rd 1849.
\(^{590}\) Ibid.,
1849 December 19th Distin performance in Exeter Hall, London

1849 December 20th Distin performance in Maidstone

A magnificent performance

1849 December 21st Distin performance in Greenwich Lecture Hall

1849 December 31st Distin performance in Greenwich

1850 January 1st Distin performance in Chippenham with Miss L. Paton (voice), Miss O'Connor (voice) and J. Willy (piano)

1850 January 2nd Distin performance in Cirencester

1850 January 3rd Distin performance in Stroud

1850 January 4th & 5th Distin performance in Cheltenham. With Miss L. Paton (voice), Miss O'Connor (voice).

1850 January 14th Distin performance in Stafford.

1850 January 15th Distin performance in Derby.

1850 January 15th Distin performance in Loughborough.

1850 January 18th Distin performance in Leicester.

1850 January 21st Distin performance in Stamford.

1850 January 22nd Distin performance in Peterborough.

1850 January 23rd Distin performance in Oundle.

1850 January 24th Distin performance in Boston.

1850 January 25th Distin performance in Lincoln.

591 The Era, December 23rd 1849.
592 Ibid.,
593 Ibid., December 16th 1849.
594 Ibid., December 23rd 1849.
595 Ibid., December 30th 1849.
596 The Musical World, January 12th 1850 p. 28.
597 Ibid.,
598 Ibid.,
599 Ibid.,
600 Ibid.,
601 Ibid., January 19th 1850, p. 44.
602 Ibid.,
603 Ibid.,
604 Ibid.,
1850  February 5th Distin performance in Ipswich. 605
1850  February 6th Distin performance in Hadleigh. 606
1850  February 7th Distin performance in Colchester. 607
1850  February 8th Distin performance in Chelmsford. 608 609
1850  February. Distin performances in the Exeter Hall, London. 610
1850  February 15th Distin performance in the Theatre Royal, Bristol with Miss O'Connor (voice) and Mr. J. Willy (piano). 611
1850  March 9th Distin performance in the Concert Hall, Liverpool with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano) 613
1850  March 11th Distin performance in Bolton
1850  March 12th Distin performance in Rochdale
1850  March 13th Distin performance in Oldham
1850  March 15th Distin performance in Mechanic's Institution, Stockport. 614

The Distin family with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).
Donizetti's quartet from Belisario (on the saxhorns accompanied by Mr. Willy on the piano), a solo from Sonnambula introducing the air "All is lost" (Henry), "Echo Hunting Duet" (Henry and William) - the echo was produced not from a third instrument in the distance, as one would suppose, but by a novel application of science conveying the sound into a glass globe, whence, at slight interval, the softened echo arises with infallible correctness. - The "Fantasia" from Lucia di Lammermoor and La Figlia di Reggimento (on the saxhorns, a "Quartet" from a favourite opera.

1850  March 16th Distin performance in Liverpool. 615

605 The Musical World, February 2nd 1850 p. 76.
606 Ibid.,
607 Ibid.,
608 The Era, February 3rd 1850.
609 The Musical World, February 2nd 1850 p. 76.
610 Ibid., pp. 63-65.
611 The Bristol Mercury, February 9th 1850.
613 The Musical World, March 16th 1850.
614 Stockport Advertiser, March 21st 1850.
615 The Era, March 10th 1850.
1850 March 19th Distin performance in Theatre, Blackburn under the patronage of Robert Hopwood, jun., Esq. with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 March 20th Distin performance in Halifax.  

1850 March 21st Distin performance in Huddersfield.  

1850 March 22nd & 23rd Distin performances in Leeds.  


Sir- Understanding from Mr. Hopkinson that our concert of last night was the first given in the Stack Exchange Hall, I cannot leave Leeds without expressing my perfect satisfaction with the room: and have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the finest rooms for sound we have ever played in; and should recommend it, for all musical purposes, in preference to any other in Leeds.  

I am, Sir, you obedient servant.  

John Distin  

1850 March. Distin performances in Manchester.  

1850 March. Advert:  

Distin’s Amateur Cornet Classes assemble nightly, for the practise of quartets, &c, at Henry Distin’s Cornet Academy/ sax horn depot, 31, Cranbourne-street, Leicester-Square.  

1850 Theodore Distin’s song The Chine was published.
1850  April 1\textsuperscript{st} Distin performance in Rochdale with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{626}

1850  April 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 4\textsuperscript{th} Distin performances in Free Trade Hall Manchester with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{627}

\textsuperscript{626} The Musical World, March 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1850 p.188.
\textsuperscript{627} Ibid.,
1850 April 5th Distin performance in Working Men's Hall, Oldham.  

1850 April 8th Distin performance in Bradford with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 9th Distin performance in Wakefield with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 10th Distin performance in Pontefract with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 11th Distin performance in Beverley with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 12th Distin performance in Music Hall, Hull with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano), and the band of the 21st Regiment.  

1850 April 13th Distin performance in Manchester Free Trade Hall.  

Melodiously soft and sweet.  

1850 April 15th Distin performance in Hull with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano), and the band of the 81st Regiment.  

1850 April 16th Distin performance in Caistor with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 17th Distin performance in Great Grimsby with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 18th Distin performance in Retford with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 April 19th Distin performance in Gainsboro' with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).  

1850 May 6th Distin performance in Burton

628 Manchester Times, April 10th 1850.  
629 The Musical World March 23rd 1850 p. 188.  
630 Ibid., April 6th 1850 p. 220.  
631 Ibid.,  
632 Ibid.,  
633 Ibid.,  
634 Ibid.,  
635 The Era, April 17th 1850.  
636 The Musical World, April 13th 1850, p. 236.  
637 Ibid.,  
638 Ibid.,  
639 Ibid.,  
640 Ibid.,
1850 May 7th Distin performance in Birmingham
1850 May 8th Distin performance in Nottingham
1850 May 20th Distin performance in Grantham.
1850 May 21st Distin performance in Uppingham.
1850 May 22nd Distin performance in Market Harboro.
1850 May 23rd Distin performance in Atherstone.
1850 May 24th Distin performance in Coventry.
1850 May Distin performance in Stockport, Macclesfield, Knutsford.
1850 May 27th Distin performance in Music Hall, Leamington with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).

1850 June Distin performance:

“Messrs. Distin will perform on the SILVER SAX HORNS. Pianist J. Willy.”

1850 June 3rd Distin performance in Norwich with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).
1850 June 4th Distin performance in Yarmouth with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).
1850 June 5th Distin performance in Lowestoft with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).
1850 June 6th Distin performance in Beccles with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).
1850 June 7th Distin performance in Harleston with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).

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642 Ibid.,
643 Ibid.,
644 Ibid.,
645 Ibid.,
646 Spirit of the Times, May 18th 1850 p. 145.
647 The Musical World, June 1, 1850 p. 346.
648 The Era, June 9th 1850.
649 The Musical World, June 1st 1850 p. 347.
650 Ibid.,
651 Ibid.,
652 Ibid.,
653 Ibid.,
1850 June 10\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Diss with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{654}

1850 June 11\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Eye with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{655}

1850 June 12\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Halesworth with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{656}

1850 June 13\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Framlingham with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{657}

1850 August 14\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Exchange rooms, Preston with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{658}

1850 September 20\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Aberdeen with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{659}

Selections from Meyerbeer's Le Prophète, Echo Hunting Duet (Henry and William on the French Horns).

1850 September 23\textsuperscript{rd} Distin performance in Balmoral Castle, Grand Concert before the Court by Command of the Queen with Miss Moriatt O'Connor.\textsuperscript{660} 661

On Monday evening there was a distinguished circle at dinner, and afterwards a concert was performed in the castle, when the Distin Family, the celebrated sax-horn players, who are now on a professional tour in Scotland, had the honour of appearing, by command of her Majesty, before the Court, and performed the following selection of music:-

Quartette Fantasia on Airs from "Lucia"
and "La Figlia del Regimento", Mr Distin and his Sons.... . . Donizetti

Madrigal "Down in a flow'ry vale", Miss M. O'Connor and Messrs. H. W. and T. Distin, composed in 1541 .... Festa

Tertetto a Canone, "Vanve a Colei," Sax Horns, Messrs. H. W. and T. Distin, Costa

Madrigal, "Since first I saw your face," Miss M. O'Connor and Messrs. H. W. and T. Distin, composed in 1600 ... . . . Ford

Solo, "All is lost" ("Sonnambula"), Sax Horn Alto, Mr H. Distin... ... Bellini

Glee, "Sleep gentle Lady," Miss M. O'Connor and Messrs. Distin... Bishop

Fantasia, on Themes from "Le Prophète," Sax Horns, Messrs. Distin... Meybeere

In addition to the programme the "Stabat Mater" of Rossini was performed.

1850 September Distin performance in Abergeldie Castle, before the Queen and Prince.\textsuperscript{662}

1850 September 30\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Bath.\textsuperscript{663}

\textsuperscript{654} The Musical World, June 8\textsuperscript{th} 1850 p. 363.
\textsuperscript{655} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{656} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{657} The Era, June 9\textsuperscript{th} 1850.
\textsuperscript{658} The Preston Guardian, August 17\textsuperscript{th} 1850.
\textsuperscript{659} The Musical World, September 21\textsuperscript{st} 1850 p. 619.
\textsuperscript{660} The Musical World, September 28\textsuperscript{th} 1850 p. 635.
\textsuperscript{661} The Observer, September 29\textsuperscript{th} 1850 p.5.
\textsuperscript{662} Caledonian Mercury, September 26\textsuperscript{th} 1850.
\textsuperscript{663} The Musical World, September 28\textsuperscript{th} 1850 p.636.
1850 October 7th & 11th Distin performances in the City Hall, Glasgow.\textsuperscript{664}

1850 October 16th & 18th Distin performances in Edinburgh with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{665}

1850 October 25th Distin performance in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{666}

1850 November 6th Distin performance in Sunderland with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{667}

1850 November 8th Distin performance in Exchange Rooms, Leeds with Miss Moriatt O'Connor and Mr. J. Willy (piano).\textsuperscript{668}

1850 November 23rd Distin performance at Mr Sharp’s Annual Concert, Oxford.

In addition, Mr. Sharp has engaged the Distin party. Of whose performance at Edinburgh on 25th of last month before a crowded and fashionable audience, the \textit{Caledonian Mercury} speaks in the following terms:- They were warmly encored in the selection from Lucia di Lammermoor; and \textit{La Figlia del Reggimento}, nor were they less successful in the gems from \textit{Le Prophète}, which were given with striking effect. In the beautiful air, “All is lost now,” Mr. Henry Distin was enthusiastically encored, while the “Echo Duet,” by Messrs. H. and W. Distin, was also demanded. …the concert was further enlivened by several glees and madrigals by the Messrs. Distin, all of which were encored, and with which, we believe, her Majesty expressed herself highly delighted on their recent performance before her at Balmoral.\textsuperscript{669}

1850 November Distin performance in Sheffield.\textsuperscript{670}

1850 December 16th Distin performance in Brentford

1850 December 17th Distin performance in Canterbury

1850 December 18th Distin performance in Dover

1850 December 19th Distin performance in Rye

1850 December 20th Distin performance in Hastings

1850 December 21st Distin performance in St. Leonards

1850 December 23rd Distin performance in St. Leonards

1850 December 26th Distin performance in the Beaumont Institution, Mile End Road, London

\noindent All letters to be addressed to Henry Distin’s Sax Horn Depot, 31, Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square.\textsuperscript{671}

\textsuperscript{664} \textit{Glasgow Herald}, October 7th 1850.
\textsuperscript{665} \textit{The Musical World}, October 26th 1850 p. 698.
\textsuperscript{666} \textit{Jackson’s Oxford Journal}, November 23rd 1850.
\textsuperscript{667} \textit{The Musical World}, November 9th 1850 p.728.
\textsuperscript{668} \textit{The Musical World}, November 16th 1850 p.745.
\textsuperscript{669} \textit{Jackson’s Oxford Journal}, November 23rd 1850.
\textsuperscript{670} \textit{The Musical World}, December 7th 1850 p.791.
1851 January 30th Distin performance in the Corn Exchange, Maidstone.\textsuperscript{672}

1851 January 31st Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Three Cups Hotel, Colchester with M. O'Connor (voice), Mr. Norman (piano).\textsuperscript{673}

1851 February 11th Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Salisbury with M. O'Connor (voice), Mr. Norman (piano).\textsuperscript{674}

1851 February 12th Distin performance in the Grand Sacred and Classical Sax-Horn Concert given by Mr. J. Shapcott (of Exeter) and his six unrivalled sons.

1851 February Distin performance in the Queen's Rooms, Portsea with M. O'Connor (voice), Mr. Norman (piano).\textsuperscript{675}

1851 February 12th Distin performance in the New Rooms, Oxford with M. O'Connor (voice), Mr. Norman (piano).\textsuperscript{676}

1851 February 18th Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Salisbury with M. O'Connor (voice), Mr. Norman (piano).\textsuperscript{677}

1851 March. Distin performance in Petworth.\textsuperscript{678}

1851 April 7th Distin performance in the Guildhall, Doncaster. Grand Concert.\textsuperscript{679}

1851 April 8th Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Chesterfield with M. O'Connor (voice), and Mr. Brown (piano).\textsuperscript{680}

1851 April 14th 15th & 17th Distin performances in the Royal Marylebone Theatre, London, Mr. Jarrett's Grand Concerts.\textsuperscript{681}

1851 April 28th -30th Distin performance in the Music Hall, Dublin, Mr. Mackintosh's concerts with M. O'Connor (voice), and Mr. R. A. Brown (piano).\textsuperscript{682}

1851 May 7th Distin performance in the Theatre, Cork with M. O'Connor (voice).\textsuperscript{683}

1851 May Distin performance in the Music-hall Dublin, Mr. Mackintosh's concert.\textsuperscript{684}

\textsuperscript{671} The Times, December 16\textsuperscript{th} 1850 p.1.
\textsuperscript{672} The Musical World, February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1851 p. 74.
\textsuperscript{673} The Era, February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1851.
\textsuperscript{674} The Musical World, February 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1851 p. 121.
\textsuperscript{675} Ibid., February 15\textsuperscript{th} 1851 p.105.
\textsuperscript{676} Jackson's Oxford Journal, February 15\textsuperscript{th} 1851.
\textsuperscript{677} The Era, February 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1851.
\textsuperscript{678} The Musical World, March 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1851 pp. 187-8.
\textsuperscript{679} The Era, April 13\textsuperscript{th} 1851.
\textsuperscript{680} The Musical World, April 26\textsuperscript{th} 1851 p. 271.
\textsuperscript{681} Ibid., April 12, 1851 p. 236.
\textsuperscript{682} Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, April 28\textsuperscript{th} 1851.
\textsuperscript{683} The Musical World, May 17\textsuperscript{th} 1851 p. 317-8.
\textsuperscript{684} Theatrical Journal, May 1851 p. 169.
1851 May 1st The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations took place in London’s Crystal Palace.

1851 Review

‘Dear Sir, The instruments supplied by you to the Band under my direction have given very great satisfaction. They are beautifully clear and bell-like in tone, possessing a sweet resonance, perfect intonation, and the immense advantage of being easily played upon- a matter of no small importance to the performer. The above testimony to the perfection of your instruments is given with great pleasure.

Yours very truly,

J. Smyth, Bandmaster nineteenth Regiment.’

1851 A. Sax transferred his agency from Distin to Rousselet & Co. 685

1851 May 15th Distin performance in the Music Hall, Belfast with M. O’Connor (voice), and Mr. R. A. Brown (piano). 686

1851 May 21st Distin performance in Liverpool Concert Hall. 687 688

1851 May 23rd Distin performance in Wigan

   Return to London on May 26th. Vocalists Miss O’Connor, Pianist Mr. R. A. Brown 689

686 The Belfast Newsletter. May 16th 1851.
687 The Era, May 18th 1851.
688 The Times, May 20th 1851 p.4.
689 Ibid.,
Appendix A

1851 May 24th Distin performance in Liverpool Concert Hall.  

1851 July 7th – August 1st. Distin performances in London. Royal Music Hall, Adelaide Street, Strand.

The Distins- Twelve Concerts.- Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings at 8, commencing Monday July 7th. Mr Distin and sons will have the honour of performing on their improved Sax Horns, introducing, for the first time in London, their newly invented Euphonic Horns; also their favourite glees and madrigals, as sung by them before Her Majesty at Balmoral.


1851 September 2nd Distin performance in Exeter.

1851 September. Distin performance in Truro

ASSEMBLY ROOMS - TRURO
TUESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1851
GRAND FAREWELL CONCERT by the
DISTINS, the original performers on the
SAX-HORNS, who have on many occasions had
the honour of performing (by command) before Her
Majesty Queen Victoria and His Royal Highness
Prince Albert, at Windsor Castle, St James’s
Palace. &c., and also before the following
distinguished personages at their several Courts :-
Her late Majesty the Queen Dowager.
Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent.
The King of Prussia.
The King of Hanover.
The Grand Duke of Saxe Coberg and Gotha.
Prince Adalbert of Prussia, &c., &c., &c.
Mr DISTIN and his SONS will perform on their
improved SAX-HORNS, also on their newly-
invented EUPHONIC HORNS, for the first time
in Truro.
Vocalists :-
Mrs Theodore Distin, (late Miss M O’Conner),
Mr H. Distin, Mr Theodore Distin, and Mr. W
Distin.
PIANO-FORTE, Mr R A BROWN.

PROGRAMME - PART 1.
GRAND QUARTETTE. - Quartette from the Opera of

1851 The Era, May 18th 1851.
1851 The Times, July 4th 1851 p.1.
1851 Ibid., July 12, 1851, p. 447.
1851 Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post, September 4th 1851.
1851 Royal Cornwall Gazette, 12th September 1851.
Appendix A

“Belisario.” On the Sax-Horns, by Mr Distin and his Sons. - Donizetti.

ROMANZA. - “Oh Stay with Me.” Mrs Theodore Distin. - Voss.


SCENA AND ARIA. - “La Somnabula.” “All is Lost.” On the Alto Sax-Horn, by Mr H Distin. - Bellini.

SONG. Mrs Theodore Distin. - Knight.

AIR. - “Where the bee Sucks.” Mrs T Distin. Dr Arne.

MADRIGAL - “Down in a Flow’ry Vale.” Mrs T Distin, And Messrs H., W., and T Distin. - Festa, 1541


An Interval of Ten Minutes

Part II


BUFFO DUETT. - “Sol, Fa, or Singing Lesson.” Sung by Mr and Mrs Theodore Distin. - Barnett.

TERZETTO. - Terzetto a Canone.” - Sax-Horns, by the Brothers Distin. - Costa.

IRISH BALLAD. - “Lament of the Irish Emigrant.” Mrs T Distin. (Composed especially for her) - Barker.


GRAND FINALE. - “God Save the Queen.” on the Sax-Horns, by Messrs Distin.

Reserved seats, 3s 6d.: Second ditto, 2s.; Back seats and Gallery, 1s. Family tickets to admit four to the reserved seats, 12s.

Tickets and Programmes to be had at the Piano-Forte and Music Warehouse of Mrs HEARD and SONS, Boscowen Street, Truro; where also may be obtained the whole of the Music, as played at the concerts of Messrs. Distin.

Doors open at half-past Seven, to commence at Eight. Carriages ordered at Ten.

Messrs. Distin will also give Concerts at: -

Falmouth, on FRIDAY, September 12

Penzance, on MONDAY, September 15

Helston, on TUESDAY, September 16.

1851 September. Distin performance in Truro. The Distins' Concert.

These celebrated artistes performed at the Assembly-Room, Truro, on Thursday evening the 11th instant. The concert was partly instrumental and partly vocal, and the music of a high class, consisting principally of selections from favourite operas. The improved sax-horns on which the Messrs. Distins perform on splendid instruments, and their execution on them may be pronounced perfect, and leaving nothing to be desired. The quartette from "Belisario" with which the concert opened, was performed by Mr. Distin and his three sons; the grand fantasia commencing the second part of the concert, were greatly applauded, and occasionally an encore was kindly responded to by the performers. A selection from Donizetti was performed on the new patent.

Ray Farr 120
Appendix A

euphonic horns with splendid effect. The vocalists were Mrs. Theodore Distin, and the Messrs. Distin, excepting Mr. Distin, sen. Several of the vocal pieces were favorably received, and they agreeably varied the entertainment. Respecting the excellence of their performance we cannot do better than to quote the opinion of the celebrated composer Meyerbeer, given when they performed at Berlin in 1846:

Never have I heard wind instruments played with so much splendor, purity, and precision; to add to this, that nothing equals the grandeur of their style. 696

1851 September 12th Distin performance in Falmouth

1851 September. Distin performance in Penzance. 697

CONCERT - We refer our readers to the advertisement in the second page giving notice of an approaching musical treat. We understand the music will be selected from some of the most popular Operas of the day: and it being the last public appearance of Mr DISTIN, we doubt not that all the Musical World of Penzance and the neighbourhood will avail themselves of the occasion.

1851 September. Distin performance in Penzance. 698

Grand Farewell Concert.

ON MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER the 15th.

MR DISTIN & HIS SONS.

The original Performers on the Sax Horns, who have had the honour of performing (by command) before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and all the principal Nobility at their several Courts.

Mr DISTIN and his SONS will perform on their improved Silver Sax Horns, also on their Newly Invented Euphonic Horns, for the FIRST TIME IN THIS TOWN.

Vocalists - Mrs Theodore Distin, Mr H Distin, Mr Theodore Distin, and Mr W Distin.

Pianoforte - Mr R A Brown.

The CONCERT will take place at the NATIONAL SCHOOL ROOM, in consequence of being disappointed of the MUSIC HALL.

Reserved Seats, 3s 6d., Family Tickets for four, 12s., Second do. 2s., Promenade 1s. To be had at Viner’s Repository, East Street Terrance.

To Commence at Eight o’clock - doors will be Open at Half-past Seven.

696 West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser, September 19th 1851.
697 The Penzance Gazette, September 10th 1851.
698 Ibid.,
Grand Farewell Concert.

ON MONDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER
the 15th.

MR. DISTIN & HIS SONS.
The original Performers on the Sax Horns, who have
had the honour of performing (by command)
before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, His
Royal Highness Prince Albert, and at
the principal Nobility at their
several Courts.

MR. DISTIN and his SONS will perform on
their Improved Silver Sax Horns, also on their
Newly Invented Euphonic Horns, for the FIRST
TIME IN THIS TOWN.

Vocalists—Mrs. Theodore Distin, Mr. H. Distin
Mr. Theodore Distin, and Mr. W. Distin.
Pianoforte—Mr. R. A. Brown.

The CONCERT will take place at the National
School Room, in consequence of being disappointed
of the Music Hall.

Reserved Seats, 3s. 6d., Family Tickets for four.
12s., Second do. 2s., Promenade 1s. To be had
at Viner’s Repository, East Street Terrace.

To Commence at Eight o’Clock—doors will be
open at Half-past Seven.

Penzance Gazette, 10 Sept 1851
TOWN HALL, REDRUTH
For One Night only, Wednesday evening,
September 17th, 1851.
GRAND CONCERT
By THE DISTINS
THE ORIGINAL PERFORMERS ON THE SAX-HORNS,
Who have had the honour of Performing (by Command)

1851 September 16th Distin performance in Helston

1851 September 17th Distin performance in Redruth

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**THE MESSRS. DISTIN'S CONCERT.**

The attendance at this concert in the National School Room on Monday evening was most respectable, comprising the principal families in the neighbourhood; who appeared to be much delighted with the music. This might have been anticipated from the well known ability of the Messrs. Distins, and from the selections they had made being pieces particularly fitted to the capabilities of their instruments. The Sax-Horns are most magnificent instruments, giving tones soft as a flute down to the deepest bass notes; and the skill with which these tones were produced was most wonderful. Sometimes they were given soft as flowing water, at other times, a perfect tempest of sound and yet within under such command that showed a perfect mastery of the music. The Euphonic Horns are also fine instruments. The principal part of the music, being well known, requires no comment at our hands; but of the "Terzetto a Canone," which we never heard before, we would observe that more flowing and graceful melody or richer harmony has seldom met our ear. The finale of "God save the Queen" was superb; after the simple melody followed some richly harmonized variations evidently by a master hand; a worthy finish to the evening's pleasure. The vocal part of the entertainment was very creditable, but not equal to the instrumental portion. Some of the pieces however were so well performed as to obtain an encore from the audience. —The piano accompaniment was on an instrument from the manufactory of the Messrs. Viner, in this borough, which proved to be one of great beauty and brilliancy of tone.

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*Penzance Gazette, 17 Sept 1851*

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699 Royal Cornwall Gazette, September 12th 1851.
Appendix A

Before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and His Royal Highness, Prince Albert,
At Windsor Castle, St James’s Palace, Balmoral Castle, Arundel Castle, and Stowe Palace.
Mr DISTIN and his SONS will perform on their improved Sax-horns, also on their newly-invented EUPHONIC HORNS, for the first time in Redruth.

VOCALISTS:–
Mrs THEODORE DISTIN, (late Miss M O’Connor),
Mr H Distin, Mr Theodore Distin, and Mr W Distin.

Piano-Forte, Mr R A BROWN

Front seats 2s.: Second ditto, 1s. Books of words at Sixpence each. Tickets to be had of Mrs BENNET, Bookseller, Redruth.

Commence at Eight o’clock.

1851 September 18th Distin performance in Truro 700

MUSIC. On Thursday evening the Distin family, whose performances in Truro some years ago had impressed agreeable reminiscences on the musical public of the town, gave a very gratifying concert at the Assembly-room. Mr Distin and his three sons performed on their Sax-horns and Euphonic-horns, some pleasing selections, principally from compositions by Donizetti, with exquisite intonation, admirable precision and compactness in their harmonics, and well-regulated taste and feeling in delivery. Mr H Distin executed the well-known scena and aria from the Somnabula - “All is lost now” - with an intensity of feeling which imparted to the language of music alone an expressiveness hardly to be exceeded when aided by words and the charm of the human voice. The audience, less numerous than the occasion deserved, gave rapturous testimony of the delight afforded them by the instrumental performances of this talented family; while the merit of the vocal performances, was scarcely inferior to that which won the plaudits of the audience in the instrumental pieces, although these, were perhaps from their greater rarity, the more attractive. Mrs Theodore Distin sang very pleasantly several favourite songs, and also took part with Messrs H., T., and W Distin in some concerted and harmonised music, in which the voices, which were generally of good quality, blended delightfully, and the characteristic beauties of the several pieces were tastefully delivered; in none more so than in the quaint and lovely Madrigal - “Down in a flow’ry vale,” by Festa, 1541. This and many other portions of the programme were encored; and though, in this respect the good nature of the performers was somewhat severely tested, they, in each instance, readily acceded to the request made to them. We find that the Messrs Distin, having visited Falmouth, Penzance, Helston, and Redruth, during the week, intend to give another concert at Truro this (Thursday) evening, and at reduced prices of admission. The programme is a pleasing one, and includes several pieces “by desire;” among which we are glad to find Festa’s beautiful madrigal, above referred to.

1851 September 19th Distin performance in St Austell 701

Distin’s Concert. - On Friday evening last, Mr Distin’s family gave a concert, and the performance altogether gave general satisfaction.

1851 October 6th Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Bristol 702

Introduction of the Cuckoo galop, selection from Der Freischutz, The soldier tired(J. Distin on the trumpet), a quartet from Berlisario (on the euphonic horns), a terzetto from Anna Bolena.

700 Royal Cornwall Gazette, September 19th 1851.
701 Ibid., September 26th 1851.
702 The Musical World, October 18th 1851 p. 667.
1851 October 11th Distin performance in Bristol Theatre, performed on Sax-tubas and newly patented Euphonic Horns.\(^{703}\)

The Distins’ Concert. –

The Messrs. Distin, whose musical gifts have commended them to the patronage of nearly all the sovereigns of Europe, as to the warmly-expressed approbation of Meyerbeer, Marshoner, Auber, Rossini, and other great composers, gave one of their highly-popular concerts at our Theatre on Monday last, attracted a crowded house. The strength of the concert, of course, lay in the solo and concerted pieces on the trumpet, Sax and euphonic horns, to their matchless and beautiful performances on which the family owe their great celebrity; but, for variety’s sake, several vocal pieces were introduced by Mrs. Theodore Distin, who, as a ballad singer, holds no mean rank in her profession, and by Messrs, Theodore, William and Henry Distin, whose voices, happily assorted, contributed to give effect to several glees, madrigals, and part songs. The opening piece, a grand selection the opera of ‘Der Freyschutz,’ was played by Mr. Distin and his sons in the most charming manner on the Sax-horns. The rich, mellow, and, where required, powerful tones of these instruments enabled the performers to interpret effectively the grand conceptions of the great German master. The warm and evidently spontaneous burst of applause which followed the performance showed how capable a mixed audience are of appreciating, when effectively presented to them, the classic compositions of high musical art. A melodia, andante and allegro, with variations by Gallay, played by Mr. H. Distin, displayed the qualities of an instrument (we believe introduced by the family), called the Sax-tuba, the tones of which are peculiarly rich and full. And when played to its loudest pitch is entirely free from the harshness which marks the forte performances on some descriptions of brass instruments. The piece was beautifully played, with the most delicate regard to light and shade, and it elicited a general call for repetition. The first part closed with a solo on the trumpet, by Mr. Distin. sen., of the vocal part of that difficult bravura song, ‘The Soldier Tired of War’s Alarms.’ Those who are acquainted with that brilliant composition, and who learn that, notwithstanding the limited capabilities of the instrument, it was played by Mr. Distin with its long ascending and descending triplet runs, its shakes and cadences, every tone being perfectly produced, will not be surprised to hear that it was unanimously encored.

The second part introduced a quartette, selected from Donizetti’s ‘Belisario,’ which was performed upon newly patented instruments, called ‘Euphonic Horns,’ the tones produced from which are of a more round and equal character (though scarcely, perhaps, so full and melodious) than those emitted by the Sax horns and tubas. The effect of the alto euphonic horn in its highest notes was quite flute-like, and the performance altogether appeared to give satisfaction. A terzetto on the Sax-horns, from ‘Anna Bolen,’ by the Brothers Distin, was rapturously encored, as was also a very spirited composition. ‘The Cuckoo Galop,’ which has recently been brought out by the Distin family, and has never failed to ‘tell’ with the audiences before whom it has been performed. Among the vocal pieces were ‘Oh! Charming May,’ a ballad by Rodwell; Dr. Arne’s air ‘Where the Bee Sucks,’ and a new German ballad ‘The Tear,’ by Kueken (with Sax-horn obligato) sung by Mrs. Theodore Distin. Constantia Festa’s well known and delightful madrigal, ‘Down in a Flow’ry Vale,’ the popular glee of ‘Harmony,’ and a feugal arrangement of ‘The Red Rose,’ were sung by her and the Brothers Distin. The concert closed with an effective arrangement of the National Anthem on the Sax-horns.

1851 October 22nd Distin performance in Wolverhampton Theatre.\(^{704}\)

1851 November. Distin performance in Assembly Room, Chesterfield.\(^{705}\)

1851 November 4th - 8th Distin performances in Free Trade Hall, Manchester with Mrs. T. Distin (voice).\(^{706}\)

\(^{703}\) Bristol Mercury, October 11th 1851.

\(^{704}\) Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper, October 19th 1851.

\(^{705}\) The Musical World, November 8th 1851 pp. 716-7.

\(^{706}\) Manchester Times, November 8th 1851.
1851  November 13th & 14th Distin performances in Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool.\textsuperscript{707}

1851  December 1\textsuperscript{st} Distin performance in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{708}

\textsuperscript{707} Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper 468 November 9, 1851

\textsuperscript{708} The Scotsman November 26\textsuperscript{th} 1851 page 1.
Appendix A

GRAND VOCAL AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS
Every MONDAY EVENING during the Months of December, January, and February, And under Distinguished Patronage.

In addition to the Eminent Artists who are engaged for the Series, arrangements have been made with THE DISTINS.
The Original Performers on the Sax-Horns, whose services have been secured for the OPENING NIGHT.

PROGRAMME
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1.

PART FIRST.
QUADRILLE—La Belle Victoria, * Massard.
With Solos for the principal Instruments.
Glee—"When first I saw your Face," * Ford.
Mrs and Messrs Distin, Lawler, and Monten Smith.
Solo—Trumpet (by desire), "The Soldier Tired," * Dr Arne.
Mr Distin, Sen.
GRAND QUARTET, from the Opera of "Der Freischutz," * Weber.
On the Sax-Horns, Mr Distin and his Sons.
Solo—"My Boyhood's Home," * Koeck.
Mr Lawler.
SYMPHONY—Movement from Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony," * Beethoven.

PART SECOND.
By Mr A. P. Thomas, Mr Winterbottom, and Mr J. Winterbottom.
NEW GERMAN BALLAD, "The Two," * Kuchen.
Mrs Distin, Sax-Horn Obligato, Mr T. Distin.
Solo—Harp, * Parish Attorney.
Mr A. P. Thomas.
Mr Lawler.
WALTZ, "Cadien," * Strauss.

On MONDAY the 5th, Miss Pearce, the celebrated English Soprano, will have the honour of making her First Appearance in Scotland.
Solos will be performed by Messrs Viotti Collins, Violin; Hamilton Jones, Cornet; Rowland, Double Bass.

To Subscribers the Terms will be:
Season Tickets (toadmission) to the Series of Thirteen Concerts—Reserved Seats, 11l. 11s. 6d.
There are still a few Tickets of the Third Hundred remaining unsold, the Price of which is 25s.
The Admission to Non-Subscribers will for the Opening Night be:
For Reserved Seats, * * * 5s.
Unreserved Seats, * * 2s.
Gallery, * * * 1s.

Subscribers' Names will be received by Mr Woop, 12 Waterloo Place, where the Subscription List is open for Signature, and where every information regarding the Concerts may be obtained.
Doors open at half-past 7; Concerts to commence at 8 o'clock.

Ray Farr
1851 December 8th Distin performance in the Theatre Royal, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.709

1851 December. Distin performance in Edinburgh710 Programme included:

- Glee When first I saw your face by Ford. Sung by Mrs and Messrs. Distin, Lawler and Montem Smith.
- Grand Quartet from Der Freyschutz by Weber on Sax-Horns.
- New German Ballad: The Tear by Kucken performed by Mrs Theodore Distin and Theodore Distin (Sax-Horn Obligato), The Cuckoo Gallop.

1852 January. Advert for The Hungarian National Melodies Arranged by Mr. Wellington Guernsey, Published by H. Distin, 31, Cranbourne Street.711

(Wellington Guernsey (1817-1855) was born in Ireland and was a soldier and war correspondent as well as a composer and poet. His most lasting song was Alice where Art Thou, which although refused by a score of publishers, eventually sold hundreds of thousands. Guernsey was himself a music publisher in Dublin between 1845 &1850.)

1852 February. Distin performance in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.712

1852 February 20th Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Richmond Arms Hotel, Horsham.713

1852 March 2nd Distin performance in the Assembly Room, Chichester.714

1852 March 29th Distin performance in the Grand musical concerts, Exeter Hall with Miss Birch, Miss Eyres, Miss Lascelles, Miss Messent, Miss Poole, Miss A. Goddard, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Weiss, Mr. G. Tedder, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Anschuez, Mr. Thirlwall (leader of the band and conductor).715

1852 April 5th Distin performance in London Tavern Bishopsgate Street.716

1852 April 6th Distin performance in the Exeter Hall. Mr. Allcroft’s Grand Musical Festival. 717

- Messrs. Distin, and the Hungarian Musical Company, leader Mr. Thirwall.718

1852 April 19th & 21st Distin performance in the Music Hall, Dublin.719

1852 April 30th An advert for “The Hungarian National Melodies arranged by Mr. Wellington Guernsey, Published by H. Distin, Military Musical Instrument Maker. 31, Cranbourne Street, London.”720

Also in the same paper (Liverpool mercury) is the announcement:

709 The Newcastle Courant, December 12th 1851.
710 The Scotsman, December 1851.
711 The Era, January 25th 1852.
712 Manchester Times, February 28th 1852.
713 The Era, February 22nd 1852.
714 Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle, March 6th 1852.
716 The Era, April 4th 1852.
717 Ibid.,
719 Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, April 22nd 1852.
720 Liverpool Mercury, April 30th 1852.
“We are authorized to state that Mr. Henry Distin, the eminent musical instrument maker and publisher, of London, has purchased the sole right of publishing the music performed by the Hungarian musical company.”

1852 May 8th Distin performance in Liverpool, Concert Hall, Lord Nelson street, Saturday evening concerts.

1852 May 15th Distin performance in Liverpool, Saturday evening concerts.

1852 May 24th Distin performance in London. Lyceum Theatre.

Concert including Messrs. Distins and the celebrated Hungarian Band.

1852 May 24th Distin performances in London. 12 adverts for a performance at Lyceum Theatre.

1852 July 16th Banbury. Distin performance in the Grand Concert by The Distins, with Mrs Theodore Distin, Mr H. Distin, Mr T. Distin and Mr W. Distin (vocal).

1852 July 20th Distin performance in Margate. 21st Ramsgate, 22nd Deal, 23rd Folkestone.

1852 August 25th Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Preston with Mrs. T. Distin (voice) and J. Willy (piano).

The Distins on the saxhorns. Also, Henry, William and Theodore appeared as vocalists. Part I: “Grand quartet” from Weber's opera Der Freyschutz (John Distin and Sons, and Willy on the piano), Aibt's ballad When the swallows (Mrs. Distin), Horsley's glee By Celia's Arbour (Mrs. Distin, Henry, William and Theodore), Bellini's aria "Movo tu viene" from La Straniera (saxtuba H. Distin), song (T. Distin), Dr. Arne's The soldier tired (J. Distin), Festa's 1541 madrigal Down in a flowry vale (Mrs. Distin, H. W. and Theodore), Kalozdy's polka The Peasant (Distins on the saxhorns). Part II: Costa's terzetto a canone Vanne a colei (brothers Distin on the saxhorns), Balfe's duet (Mr. and Mrs. T. Distin), "Grand selection" from the Bellini's opera La Sonnambula (Distins on the saxhorns), Thalberg's solo on the pianofort (J. Willy), Gunl's Cuckoo Galop (Distins on the saxhorns), glee The vilage choristers (Mr. and Mrs. T. Distin), finale God save the Queen (Distins on the saxhorns).

1852 August Distin performance in Zoological Gardens, Liverpool.

1852 September 10th & 11th Distin performance in Scarborough, review

Both concerts were crowded.

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721 Liverpool Mercury, April 30th 1852.
722 Ibid., May 7th 1852.
723 The Era, May 16th 1852.
724 The Times, April 28th 29th 30th May 1st May 3rd May 4th May 5th May 7th May 11th May 12th May 14th May 18th 1852.
725 The Times, July 20th 1852.
726 Liverpool Mercury, August 31st 1852.
1852  September 20th Distin performance in Concert Hall Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool (the first of three concerts). with Miss Stabach (voice), Orpheus glee union, Mr. Jolley (piano accompaniment) and Mr. Best (organ).

John played on the trumpet, H. W. and T. on the flugelhorns. Selections from Costa, Weber, Rossini, Shelton, Arne, and others. This was the farewell of John Distin.

1852  October 1st Distin performance in Liverpool, Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street.

1852  October 6th Distin performance in Court House, Burnley with J. Willy (piano), Mrs. T. Distin (voice).

1852  November 12th 13th 18th & 19th Distin performances in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester with M. O'Connor and Mr. Willy (piano).

1852  December 20th Distin performance in Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, Grand Concert with Mr. Willy (piano), Miss Lizzy Stuart, Miss Jacobs, Mr. George Tedder, Herr Julius Benjamin, Mr. Case, Mr. Maurice Davies.


1853  January 20th Thomas Harper (senior) died. Held the position of Professor of Trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music from 1829 – 1845, was the Inspector of Trumpets and Bugles to the East India Company and became well known for his famous slide trumpet tutor. His obituary read, ‘this estimable man and admirable musician’.

Mr. Harper, the well known and much-esteemed performer on the trumpet, died on the 20th of January 1853 of a seizure which took place during the rehearsal of the Harmonic Union (Weber’s Concert Stuck). The late Mr. Harper was a native of Worcester, and was born, it is said, in May 1786.

1853  February Distin performance in Assembly Room, Loughborough.
1853 March 8th Distin performance in Theatre Royal, Sadler's Wells, London with Miss Poole, Mr. Henry Drayton, Messrs. R. & C. Blagrove, Mr. Husk, Mr. Baldwin, and others.  

1853 April 11th Distin performance in London, Exeter Hall. Sax Horns, the Distins: Hungarian Melodies.

1853 May 28th Adolphe Sax transferred his franchise of saxhorns from Rousselot to Rudall, Rose and Carte.

1853 June 10th Distin performance in the Royal Princess’ Concert Rooms, Grand concert for the benefit of a charity with Miss Stabach, Miss Felton, Mrs. T. Distin, Miss M. Williams, Miss Ransford, and Messrs. Land, Young, Day, Percy, Hobbs, and Lawier.


1853 July 8th Distin performance in Hanover Square rooms, London, Mr. Aptommas morning concert. Henry Distin saxtuba soloist among other artists.

1853 July 18th 21st 25th - 29th Distin performances in Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens with Godfrey's military band, Miss C. Nott (voice).

The “celebrated’ Distins performed at the Royal Surrey Zoological Gardens (‘the original sax-horn players')

1853 September 5th The first band contest to be held in Belle Vue, Manchester was won by Mossley Temperance Band playing a set of Saxhorns (or possibly Ventil Horns) supplied/built by Distin.

1853 September 20th Distin performances in Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool. (Three concerts) (According to the advertisement these would be the last concerts before retiring into private life).

1853 November. Distin performance at the Royal Marionette Theatre

The Brothers Distin also add considerably by their saxhorn performances.

1853 October and November. Distin performance in the Royal Marionette Theatre, Adelaide Street, West Strand, every evening at 8pm. The Distin brothers and the Hungarian band conducted by Kalozdy.
Introducing the renowned Hungarian Band, in their National Costume, conducted by Kalozdy.\textsuperscript{754}

However, not everyone was impressed by the Distin brass group. A reporter, from a concert at the Royal Marionette Theatre, describes his shock:

In addition to the Hungarian band, the concerts are assisted by the playing of the Distin family, who startle the echoes of the Lowther Arcade by the vigorous notes they blow upon their monster horns. How all the animals in the numerous Noah’s-arks, that are anchored in that children’s Bay of Toys, must wake up startled at the sound!\textsuperscript{755}

During these concerts at the Royal Marionette Theatre the brothers performed as vocalists as well as brass players:

Vocalists- Mr. William Distin, Mr. Theodore Distin and Mr. Henry Distin. Instrumentalists: the Brothers Distin, on the Sax-horns.\textsuperscript{756}

In addition to their performances as brass players and vocalists they are reported as introducing new arrangements to their repertory and also publishing:

First week of a new selection from Der Frayschutz (sic) by the Brothers Distin and the Hungarian Band…. The whole of the Music performed by the Hungarian band is published by Distin, and may be had at the doors of the Theatre.\textsuperscript{757}

\textbf{1853}  November 17\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Lynn Theatre, Miss E. T. Greenfield's concert.\textsuperscript{758}

1853  Wagner visited the Sax workshops in Paris, where he saw and heard saxhorns.
In October 1853 Wagner visited the Sax premises in Paris and was so impressed with the sound of the saxotromba that he included the instrument in his *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle to be played by the French horn players. However, following some disputes between Sax and Wagner the instrument was replaced in the orchestra by another type of horn, which became the Wagner tuba.

1854 January 3rd. Distin performance in Hanover Square Rooms.

1854 January 3rd Distin performance in the Library Hall-Athenaeum, Manchester. John Distin performed with other eminent artists: Mrs. Alexander Newton, Miss E. T. Greenfield, the "Black Swan", Mr. Augustus Braham, Mr. Charles Cotton, and Miss Ward (piano).  

1854 February, 13th Distin performance in the Beaumont Institution, Mile End with Madame Newton Frodsham, Misi Rheinmeiogh, (pupil of Mr. Sims Reeves), Miss Dolby, Mr. Augustus Braham and Mr. Henri Drayton, were the vocalists—Miss L. Taylor (Concertina), Mr. V. Collins (Violin) and Mr. Distin, senr. (Trumpet).  

1854 March 1st Distin performance in the Lyceum Theatre, London, Mr. Allcroft's seventeenth annual concert with Mesdames Sims Reeves, Weiss, Messent, F. Reeves, Stabbach, Poole, Ormond, M'Alpine, Rebecca Isaacs, Amedei, Lablache, and Favanti; Messrs. Sims Reeves, Augustus Braham, Manby, Tedder, Brandt, Walworth, Coni, Gotton, Weiss, Lablache, and Frank Bodda. Solo performers—Miss Arabella Goddard, Richardson, Distins, Case, Lazarus, Schallbeu, Mr. Distin and Sons, and Herr Ernst. Conductors—Mr. Benedict, Schira, Tully, and Frank Mori. Leader—Mr. Griesbach.

759 *The Musical World*, January 7th 1854 p. 11.
761 Ibid., February 25, 1854, p. 136
1854 March 7th Distin performance in the Freemason's tavern (116th Anniversary meeting of the Royal Society of Musicians).\textsuperscript{762}

1854 March 8th Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane, London, concert for the support of the wives and children of the British soldiers.\textsuperscript{763}

1854 March 18\textsuperscript{th} Henry Distin registered a design for an Artiste’s Cornet-à-Piston. BT45/18/3577, Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square, London.

1854 March 21\textsuperscript{st} Distin performance in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London.\textsuperscript{764, 765}

1854 March 22\textsuperscript{nd} Distin performance in the Exeter Hall, London\textsuperscript{766}

1854 March 29\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in the Exeter Hall. Mr. George Case's concert. Performance by John Distin (Trumpet) & Henry Distin (Sax Horn).\textsuperscript{767, 768}

1854 April 24\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in the Philharmonic Rooms, Newman Street.\textsuperscript{769}

1854 May 8\textsuperscript{th} Distin performance in Hanover Square rooms, morning concert (in aid of the funds of the Distressed Needlewomen's Home) with Miss Grace Alleyne, Miss Bansford, Miss Eyles, Miss Birch, Mrs. A. Gilbert, Miss S. Cole, Madame F. Lablache, Miss Louisa Pyne, Miss E. Birch, Miss Lascelles, Miss Clara Fraser, Mdlle. Norie, Mr. Bansford, Mr. Elliot Galer, Signor F. Lablache, Mr. Francis, Signor P. Onorati, Mr. Frank Bodda, and Mr. Alfred Pierre, as vocalists; and, as instrumentalists, Miss Arabella Goddard, who played Stephen Heller's elegant caprice, "La Fontaine de Schubert," with great brilliancy—Mdle. Louise Christine, whose harp performances were much admired, Mr. George Case, and the Messrs. Distin. The conductors were Herr Carl Wolfsohn, Mr. Charles Blagrove, and Mr. A. Gilbert.\textsuperscript{770}

1854 Letter to Henry Distin

Dear Sir,- In answer to yours, I beg to say the Flügel Horns supplied by you to the Band under my direction are, in my opinion, in every respect worthy of your establishment. They are beautiful and rich in tone, perfect in intonation, and of sound and finished workmanship. Their durability I have no doubt of, having had experience of your Instruments in my late band of the nineteenth Regiment.

Yours very truly,
J. SMYTH
(Music Master, Royal Artillery Band, Woolwich.)

1854 May. The Crystal Palace Brass Band

\textsuperscript{762} The Musical World, March 11\textsuperscript{th} 1854 p. 163.
\textsuperscript{763} The Morning Chronicle, March 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1854.
\textsuperscript{764} The Times, March 16\textsuperscript{th} & March 20\textsuperscript{th} 1854.
\textsuperscript{765} The Era, March 19\textsuperscript{th} 1854.
\textsuperscript{766} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{767} Lloyds Weekly Newspaper, March 26\textsuperscript{th} 1854.
\textsuperscript{768} The Musical World, April 1\textsuperscript{st} 1854, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{769} Ibid., May 1\textsuperscript{st} 1854.
\textsuperscript{770} Ibid., May 13\textsuperscript{th} 1854 p. 314.
The organisation of this monstrous military orchestra for service at Sydenham has just been completed by M. Schallehn, the music director appointed by the board of management and directors of the company. It will consist of sixty-four first professors of their art in this country and abroad. All the improvements effected of late years in the manufacture and make of brass instruments, both at home and on the continent, M. Schallehn has introduced into this orchestra…...The instruments have been manufactured in London by Messrs. Distin and Kohler, and combine every improvement hitherto made in this branch of manufacture. Amongst other novelties introduced are a pair of copper kettle-drums, the largest ever made, with index complete, so that they can be tuned to any key; they are each as large as an eighty-four gallon hogshead; while, in juxtaposition to them, are two military side drums, not larger than a child’s toy, weighing only a few pounds, and only five or six inches in depth, yet with a body of tone never produced in side-drums of the ordinary calibre. There instruments of percussion have been made by Mr. Henry Distin, of Cranbourn-street, who has patented them…Each member of the orchestra will be paid on the average two pounds per week…..There has never been so large a military brass band organised in this country….The directors have some idea of adding an additional twenty five performers to the band. So much the better. 771

1854 June 2nd Distin performance in St. Martin's Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Donald King's concert. 772

1854 June 30th Distin performance in Mr Willis's Rooms, Miss Ursula Barclay's concert with Mr. Theodore Distin, Messrs. Distin. In the same concert would appear: Miss Dolby, Miss Fanny Rowland, Signor Ciabatta, Mr. H. C. Cooper, Mr. R. Blagrove, Mr. G. A. Osborne, Mr. A. Nicholson, Signor Nappi, Herr Formes. Accompanyist Mr. W. G. Cusins. 773

1854 July 7th Distin performance in Drury Lane Theatre, Signor Puzzi's benefit. The performance commenced with the first act of Sonnambula, for Mdlle. Agnes Bury, Signors Arnoldi and Bettini; followed by a miscellaneous concert; succeeded by the second act of Freischutz, for Mad. Caradori, Mdlle. Sedlatzek, and Herr Reichardt; after which the whole of the last act of Fidelia, witli Mad. Rudersdorf, Mdlle. Sedlatzek, Herr Reichardt, and Herr Formes, concluding with a ballet divertissement. The concert was supported by Mesdames Persiani, Amedei, Angles Fortuni, Misses Pyne, Messrs. Jules Lefort, W. Harrison, Allan Irving, and Herr Reichardt, as vocalists; and Signor Bazzini (violin), M. Prudent (pianoforte), Messrs. Horanyi, H. Distin, Hartman, T. Distin, Bezuth, Angyal, W. Distin, and Kunitz (horns), as instrumentalists. 774

1854 August. Henry Distin 'invented' the flugel Horn.

Mr Distin’s newly-invented instrument the Flugel Horn- This invention is an important step in the progress of Instrumental music775


1854 September 16th. 776 Advert:

Henry Distin’s Flugel Horn and cornet classes for amateurs with new selections of popular music, arranged expressly for them by Distin. Members wishing to join are requested to make early application, the classes being nearly completed. To facilitate reading at sight, members can have

771 The Era, May 14th 1854.
772 The Musical World, June 3rd 1854, p. 377.
774 Ibid., July 8th 1854 p. 459.
775 John Bull Newspaper, August 5th 1854.
776 The Times, September 16th 1854.
private lessons at H. Distin’s military musical instrument manufactory, 31 Cranbourn Street, Leicester square.

**1854** October 9th & 10th. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London. Performance of the Flugal Horn Union.  
Whose performances on these newly-invented instruments have created quite a sensation.

A complete brass band. At the Royal Panopticon they are played by eight admirable performers, including the three Messrs. Distin, whose selections of classical music, beautifully arranged and executed, form one of the most delightful musical treats that can be imagined.  

**1854** October 29th. London. Performances of Henry Distin’s Flügel Horn Union at The Royal Panopticon, Leicester Square, London every evening (except Saturday) at 9.15.

**1854** December 18th Distin performance in the Large Room of the London Tavern, City, Concertina Concert.

**1854** December 26th Advert-

Distin’s Flugel Horn Union are now open to accept engagements for concerts in London and the vicinity. For terms apply to the secretary at H. Distin’s 31, Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square.

**1855** July 13th. Distin performance in the Lyceum Theatre.

**1855** January 13th Advert in The Times for *Grandpa’s Polka* published by Henry Distin, 31, Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square.

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777 *The Era*, October 8th 1854.  
778 *John Bull Newspaper*, August 5th 1854.  
779 *The Era*, October 29th 1854.  
781 *The Times*, December 1854.  
782 Ibid., January 13th 1855.
1855  February 14th Distin performance in the Assembly Rooms, Gravesend.\(^{783}\)

1855  February 21st Distin performance in the Lyceum Theatre, London, Mr. Allcroft's annual concert.\(^{784}\)

1855  Letter to Henry Distin

Sir, I have pleasure of intimating to you that your ‘New Improved Model Trumpet’ and Bugle, for the use of the British Army, have been approved of by me...
Believe me to remain, yours very truly
J. Smyth, (Band Master, Royal Artillery).’

1855  May 25th Distin performance in the Queen's concert room, Hanover Square, Miss Stabach's annual concert.\(^{785}\)

1855  June 12th Distin performance in the Hanover Square rooms, Misses McAlpine's concert.\(^{786}\)

1855  June 22nd Distin performance in Camborne.

It will not suit our purpose to criticise the playing of the "dramatic personae". As an "ensemble", they are the best that have yet visited our "copper diggings", whilst the orchestra, consisting of the Camborne brass band, under the leadership of Mr John Rowe (composed of nine of Henry Distin's best Sax horn instruments), share the applause of the house.\(^{787}\)

1855  July 4th Distin performance in the Theatre Royal Drury-Lane, Mr. E. T. Smith's benefit with Mr. Viotti Collins (violin), Master Arthur Napoleon (piano), Madame Gussier (voice), Madlle. Rita Favanti (voice), Miss Fanny Huddart (voice), Lucy Escott (voice), Signor Armandi (voice), Signor Flavio (voice), Signor Gussier (voice), Mr. Hamilton Braham (voice).\(^{788}\)

1855  September 14th Distin performance in the Town Hall, Barnet, Mr. Frank Bodda's annual concert.\(^{789}\)

1855  Belle Vue Brass Band Contest result was:\(^{790}\)

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Accrington.</td>
<td>Conductor: Radcliffe Barnes</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Mossley Temperance Saxhorn</td>
<td>Conductor: W. Taylor</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>St Mary's Enfield (Blackburn)</td>
<td>Conductor: J. Roberts</td>
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<td>Batley United.</td>
<td>Conductor: J. Farrar</td>
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<td>Fairburns.</td>
<td>Conductor: W. Burns</td>
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<td>Harden Mills (Disqualified)</td>
<td>Conductor: D. Hopkinson</td>
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\(^{783}\) *The Musical World*, March 3rd 1855 p. 140.
\(^{784}\) Ibid., February 24, 1855 p. 123.
\(^{785}\) Ibid., June 2nd 1855 p. 345.
\(^{786}\) Ibid.,
\(^{787}\) *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22nd June 1855.
\(^{788}\) *Daily News*, July 4th 1855.
\(^{789}\) *The Musical World*, September 22nd 1855 p. 610.
Appendix A

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Conductor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holmfirth</td>
<td>J. Beaumont</td>
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<td>Mossley Brass</td>
<td>W. Steel</td>
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<td>Horsforth</td>
<td>J. Wilkinson</td>
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<td>Low Moor</td>
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<td>Victoria Foundry</td>
<td>J. Storey</td>
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<td>Whitworth</td>
<td>J. Low</td>
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1856  February. Tischendorf vs. Distin. Court case.\(^791\)

The plaintiff, W. Tischendorf, (an Austrian Pole) sued the defendant Henry Distin, for breach of contract and won the case. Henry Distin was fined £50.

1856  June 26\(^{th}\) Court Case:

Richard & Elizabeth Payne were charged with stealing a quantity of musical instruments, the property of Henry Distin, 34, Cranbourne Street.\(^792\)

1856  Monday, 30\(^{th}\) June. Enderby Jackson (1827–1903) wrote *Yorkshire Waltzes* for a brass band contest at the Zoological Gardens in Hull. He instigated the beginning of the National Brass band Championships (London) and his mission statement, ‘The Propagation of Music amongst the Working Classes’ establishes him as one of the most important brass band personalities of the 19\(^{th}\) Century. From his biography we learn more about the background to this piece:

I arranged to hold my first Band Contest in the Zoological Gardens Hull on Monday, July 4\(^{th}\) 1856, and at once issued my announcements to the Band instructors, Christmas 1855. I expressly composed, as test piece, a set of Waltzes with Introduction, etc. and visited the teachers in the various towns explaining my new effects and how they were to instruct the workmen; where to buy the best and cheapest instruments and other details.\(^793\)

Jackson’s biography is not correct in a few details: 21 bands entered but only 12 took part.\(^794\)\(^795\)

The result of the competition was:

1\(^{st}\) prize Leeds Railway Foundry Band. Conductor Richard Smith
2\(^{nd}\) prize Black Dike Mill Band  Conductor Longbottom
3\(^{rd}\) prize Batley Band        Conductor J. Pickering

Following the competition, while the judges Duval, Hopkinson, Short, Brown and Oakden were making their decision all the bands gathered to play a short programme:

*Yorkshire Waltzes*
*French National Anthem*
*English National Anthem*
Conducted by E. Jackson

1857  June. Advert for the Great Handel Festival (in 1859).\(^796\)

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\(^791\) *The Times*, February 2\(^{nd}\) 1856 p.11.
\(^792\) *Morning Chronicle*, June 26\(^{th}\) 1856.
\(^793\) Jackson, John Enderby, *A Biography*, Unpublished 1885.
\(^794\) Ibid.,
\(^795\) *Hull Packet & East Riding Times*, July 4\(^{th}\) 1856.
\(^796\) *The Manchester Guardian*, June 12\(^{th}\) 1857.
In the centre, between the organ and the band, the large drum made by Mr. Distin for the festival, will be a conspicuous object. It is between 6ft, and 7ft. In diameter, and, when gently struck, produces a tone resembling the booming of a deep pedal-pipe.

1857 July. Band Contest in Hull Zoological Gardens organised by Enderby Jackson in association with Mr. Alderson. Morley Band won, Batley Brass 2nd, Brighouse and Black Dyke took part. Each band played the test piece *Londesborough Galop* composed by Enderby Jackson before their ‘Own Choice’ piece. All the bands united at 4.30 to perform God Save the Queen and Rule Britannia under the conductorship of Mr. J. Deacon (bandmaster of the West York Rifles).  

1857 September 14th Advert for Distin performance at Crystal Palace.  

1857 September 19th John Distin retirement concert at the Crystal Palace, London.  

Distin's grand farewell concert with Madame Clara Novello, Miss Poole, Miss Louisa Vinning, Madame Newton Frodsham, Madame Caradori, Messrs. Brahams, Orpheus Glee Union, and the aid of the grand organ and Crystal Palace Band. The Distin family brass ensemble had reduced their performance activities considerably mostly because of the prosperity of the manufacturing company but also because of John Distin’s condition; he was losing his teeth.  

Approaching Grand Concert- We perceive that Mr. John Distin, the sire of the Distin family, purposes taking, on the 19th instant (September), a farewell concert at the Crystal Palace. In consideration of the high standing which Mr. Distin took in George the Fourth’s private band, her Majesty the Queen, the Prince Consort, and her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent have accorded to him their special patronage, while he has been enabled to announce such a commanding bill of fare as should ensure an immense attendance. Amongst the vocalists (some thirty in number) who will appear on the occasion are Madame Clara Novello, Madame Endessoyn, Miss Louisa Vining, Miss Poole, Madame Newton Frodsham, Miss Rainsford, Madame Caradori, Miss Stabbach, the Misses Brougham, Miss Julia Bleaden, Mr. Charles Braham, Mr. Hamilton Braham, Mr. G. Perrin, Mr. Montem Smith, &c. The great festival organ will play, as also the Crystal Palace band, and there will be a grand display of fountains. Such a ‘Shilling festival’ has not, we should say, been heretofore experienced. Mr. Distin has done much for the enjoyment of the public; we trust that they will not forget him.

A crowd of 20,000 packed the Crystal Palace for John’s ‘farewell concert’ where John played the trumpet part in Handel’s ‘Let the Bright Seraphim’ from *Samson*, with Miss

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797 *The Hull Packet & East Riding Times*, July 3rd 1857.
798 *The Observer*, September 14th 1857.
799 *The Era*, September 13th 1857.
800 Ibid.,
801 *Bristol Mercury*, September 12th 1857.
Rainsford as vocal soloist. In the same concert the Flugel Horn Union organised by Henry Distin performed with Sam West leading on Eb Flugel Horn.

A monster concert took place yesterday, at the Crystal Palace, for the benefit of Mr Distin, under the patronage of her Majesty, the Prince Consort, and the Duchess of Kent. The charge of admission being only 1s., a very large attendance was expected, and this was most satisfactorily realised. Long before the commencement of the concert the whole of the spacious orchestra, not long since filled by 3,000 chorus singers, was densely crowded with the audience, and every available seat within sight or hearing of the singers, who were placed at the end opposite to the great organ, was occupied. From all appearances there could not have been fewer than 20,000 persons present. The programme contained a long list of names, more or less celebrated, at the head of which stood Madame Clara Novello, who sung with great effect Weber’s beautiful scena from “Oberon,” “Softly sighs,” and also Mozart’s “Deh vieni non tardar,” and a Jacobite song. Her great superiority in style and in voice was recognised by all, and the applause was immense. Miss Louisa Vinning, Madame Caradori, Madame Endersohn, Mr Montem Smith, and a number of others, did their best to please the audience, but there were very few whose powers enable them to fill the prodigious space of this vast concert-room. There were several young singers who exerted themselves very successfully; among these may be favourably mentioned Miss Theresa Jeffries. All tried the extent of their lungs, but in many cases the straining after noise was productive of false intonation. The great defect of the programme consisted in the want of concerted music, there having been no fewer than nineteen solos, and only four duets. A trio performed upon the saxhorns by the Messrs. Distin was admirably played, and the accompaniment to, “Let the bright Seraphim,” was very well executed by Mr. Distin. After the concert there was a display of the upper fountains, and, subsequently, a performance upon the festival organ by Mr. J. T. Cooper. The arrangements at the railway terminal were very satisfactory, and the whole audience seemed delighted with the treat afforded them at so moderate a price.

1857 October 16th Distin performance in the St. George's Hall, Liverpool, Saturday evening concerts.

1858 May. Brass Band Contest in Northumberland Cricket Ground, Newcastle. Each band was required to play Venetia Waltz by Enderby Jackson composed expressly for the contest in addition to their ‘own-choice’ piece.


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804 West, Sam. ‘Letter’, British Bandsman May 1889
805 The Observer, September 20th 1857 p.5.
806 The Era, October 18th 1857.
807 Musical Gazette, July 1858 p.325.
1858  October 9\textsuperscript{th} Crystal Palace, Mr. Distin's Grand Vocal and Military Festival which received poor reviews.\textsuperscript{808}

DISTIN’S CONCERT
Mr. Distin’s vocal and military concert on a grand scale took place at the Crystal Palace on Saturday. The programme contained the names of no fewer than thirty singers, besides the Orpheus Glee Union and the Messrs. Distin themselves. Among the singers were Madame Rudersdorff, Madame Albertazzi, Miss Dolby, Miss Poole, Miss Messent, Miss Ransford, Messrs. Morgan, Perrin, Charles Braham, and others. In addition to this array of vocal talent there were performances in different parts of the building by seven or eight bands – the 11th Hussars, the Royal Artillery, the 15th Hussars, the 36th Regiment, the 47th Regiment, the 4th Royal Lancashire Militia, the Royal Lancashire Artillery, and the Crystal Palace Band; and, subsequently, by all the bands united. The vocal concert included thirty-one solos and seven duets, besides a concerted piece by the Fugel (sic) Horn Union, a trio of sax horns by the brothers Distin, a part song by the Orpheus Glee Union, and a solo on the pianoforte by Mr. Brinley Richards. Mr. Distin himself played an obligato to a song of Bishop’s, “Peace Inviting,” with great taste. The song itself was sung with considerable power and effect by Miss Ransford, and it was deservedly encored. The horn is an instrument particularly well suited to such a building as the Crystal Palace, and an addition of more music for that instrument would have been a great improvement to the concert. The performance was a pleasing one, and seemed to give satisfaction to the audience, which was very numerous. The conductors were Messrs. Randegger, Ganz, Beale, and Berger.\textsuperscript{809}

\textsuperscript{808} The Musical World, October 16\textsuperscript{th} 1858 p. 665.

\textsuperscript{809} The Observer, October 11\textsuperscript{th} 1858. p.5.
1858  December 14th Distin performance in the St. James’s Hall, Mr. Ransford’s annual concert. 810

1859  April 18th Distin performance in St. Martin’s Hall, Mr. George Tedder’s Annual Concert with the band of the Goldstream Guards and a number of vocalists. 811

1859  June 19th The Era announce that Henry Distin’s double drums, the largest ever manufactured, are to be used in a performance at the Crystal Palace. 812 813

(The Handel Commemoration Festival included a performance of various works by Handel given by a large choir made up of 2,538 people from all over Britain. The orchestra was 462 instrumentalists conducted by Sir Michael Costa. The audience numbered over 18,000.)

1859  September 11th London. Silver Ventil Horn Union

Weston’s Grand Music Hall, High Holborn - E. Weston begs most respectfully to inform the Nobility, his Patrons, and the Public generally, he has made arrangements with the following distinguished artistes:- Mr. Henry Distin’s New Silver Ventil Band stands unequalled, their first appearance in London, embracing the powerful talent of M. Duhame, from Jullien’s, acknowledged to be the first performer on the Cornet in Europe. Musical Director, Mr. P. Corri 814

These Ventil horns were erroneously pictured and described as the original saxhorns in Geringas’s book on musical instruments. 815

Not Saxhorns and not the Distins.

The picture above is from Carl Geringer’s “Musical Instruments’ London 1943 plate LX11 and is said, erroneously, to be the four Distins with five Saxhorns made in 1844. The instruments are not Saxhorns but Ventil Horns (designed by Distin). The men in the

810  The Musical World, December 18th 1858 p. 813.
811  The Era, April 17th 1859.
812  Ibid., June 19th 1859.
813  The Observer, June 19th 1859.
814  The Era, September 11th 1859.
picture are not the Distins and the picture has been removed from subsequent editions of the book.

1859  September Distin performance in the Weston’s Grand music Hall, High Holborn

E. Weston begs most respectfully to inform the Nobility, his Patrons, and the public generally, he has made arrangement with the following distinguished artistes;- Mr. Henry Distin’s New Silver Ventil Band stands unequalled, their first appearance in London, embracing the powerful talent of M. Duhame, from Jullien’s, acknowledged to be the first performer on the Cornet in Europe.  

1859  October 5th. Distin’s Ventil Horn Union The Daily Telegraph announces-

Weston’s Grand Music Hall. Mr. Edward Weston respectfully informs his friends and the public that his he has made arrangements with Mr. Henry Distin for his Ventil Horn Union, who make their first appearance on the 10th of October, and perform on an entirely new set of instruments, invented and manufactured by Mr. H. Distin. The following celebrated Artistes will have the honour of appearing every evening at 9 and 11 o’clock:

- Solo Alto Ventil Horn  Mr. Duhamé (The celebrated Cornet performer from M. Jullien’s Concerts)
- Solo Soprano Ventil Horn  Mr. West (From the Royal English Opera)
- Second Alto Ventil Horn  Mr. Prospère (jun.) (Pupil of M. Boulcourt)
- Solo Tenor Ventil Horn  Mr. Henry Distin
- First Tenor Ventil Horn  Mr. H. E. Taylor (From the Royal Prince’s Theatre)
- Second Tenor Ventil Horn  Mr. W. S. Davies
- Solo Bass Ventil Horn  Mr. Saunders
- Contrabass Ventil Horn  Herr Kurutz (Formerly Member Kalozdy’s Hungarian Band)
- Double Contrabass Ventil Horn  Herr Krill
The soprano Ventil horn played by West in the picture above does not have an upright bell and appears to be an anomaly. Perhaps it was an Eb Flugel Horn. West, in a letter of 1889 (see below) explains how he was the leader of the Flugel Horn Union of 1857.

Distin was still producing these instruments in 1869. Ventil horns were made, as can be seen in the advertisement below, in a range of sizes and pitches, from: Eb soprano, Bb alto, Eb tenor and Bb baritone and Bb bass but they were not widely accepted as substitution or replacement for saxhorns in brass bands.

819 *Distin’s Instrument Catalogue* 1869.
1859  December 2\textsuperscript{nd}  Weston’s Music Hall, High Holborn.  
\textit{Distin’s celebrated Ventil Horn Union}\textsuperscript{820}

1860  January 12\textsuperscript{th} 1860 & February 24\textsuperscript{th}  Correspondence with Robert Crawshay (Owner and manager of the Cyfarthfa band)

January 12, 1860  
H. Distin, Leicester Sq.

I send you today a box containing a Contra-Bass Instrument of your make which I will thank you to repair and return as soon as you possibly can.

Robert Crawshay  
pp. William Jones\textsuperscript{4}

February 24, 1860  
Henry Distin, Leicester Sq., London

I had quite overlooked yours of the 13 January. I now send you Post Office order for 20/6 — vizt. 16/- for repairing the instrument and 4/6 for the carriage which you paid. I shall be obliged for a receipt.

Robert Crawshay  
pp. William Jones\textsuperscript{4}

1860  January. John Distin’s Farewell Concert at Exeter Hall.

We beg to call the attention of our musical friends to the grand farewell concert of Mr. Distin on the first February next. This artist has served his country well as a trumpeter some fifty years and more, commencing his career in the Devon Militia as a boy, then, in the Foot Guards, then in George the Fourth’s private band, when at his death he and others were all sent to the right about without a pension. After a long service under the Crown he had to commence a new career as a solo and orchestral trumpeter and with his sons, giving concerts throughout the kingdom.

The case of Mr. Distin deserves the support of the British public. Few men have made sweeter noises in the world, and now — having lost, from great and continued pressure, the whole of his front teeth — he seeks to obtain some sort of provision by means of a concert to exempt him from the sufferings of an indifferently provided for old age. The trumpet is an instrument by which but little can be accumulated, however long the service. Who can forget old John Distin’s “Soldier Tired of war’s alarms,” or Let the Bright Seraphim, in burning row, Their loud uplifted angel

\textsuperscript{820} \textit{The Era}, November 27\textsuperscript{th} 1859.
trumpets blow. In how many ears those words will awaken the echo of Distin’s trumpet as its music soared, triumphing and dallying with its strength and sweetness – how it sympathised with the singer in her highest flights in the days of vocalists past, and gone and forgotten by the present generation. It is now to be hoped that many high in the land will patronize the old musician and contribute to the fund to be raised for the worn-out artist on this occasion. Madame Catherine Hayes, Miss Georgina Stabbach, several glee unions, and a host of talent of the highest order have volunteered their services on this interesting occasion.\textsuperscript{821}

1860 February. In true “Show-biz' style John arranged further farewell concerts and an advert for John Distin’s ‘Farewell Concert’ at Exeter Hall, London 1\textsuperscript{st} Feb. 1860\textsuperscript{822} explains:

‘Few men have made sweeter noises in the world, and now-having lost, from great and continued pressure, the whole of his front teeth- he seeks to obtain some sort of provision by means of a concert to exempt him from the sufferings of an indifferently provided for old age.’

A report from: Mr. Distin’s Concert at Exeter Hall' February 5\textsuperscript{th} 1860\textsuperscript{823} lists the artists including, Mrs Theodore Distin (either Maria (1\textsuperscript{st} wife) or Anne (2\textsuperscript{nd} wife) but Mr. George Loder (John’s brother in law) failed to show up! ‘We regret to say the hall was not filled, and that Mr. Distin will realise little, if anything, by the proceeds of the concert, which we regret exceedingly.’

Mr. J. Distin’s Concert at Exeter Hall.

Mr. Distin, once the famed trumpeter of the London concerts, &c., gave his farewell concert on Wednesday evening. His programme was a very attractive one, and when put forth included no less than twenty-nine vocal pieces, and, in addition, solos for the violin, flute, and concertina. Amongst the vocalists who pledged themselves to appear at Mr. Distin’s farewell concert, and did so, were Madame Rudersdorff, Catherine Hayes, Miss Eyles, Miss Susanna Cole, Mrs. Theodore Distin, Misses Harrington, Mascall, Stanley, Madame Conyngham, Miss Medora Collins, &c., Mr. Suchet Champion, Mr. Lawler, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Percy, Mr. George Perren, Mr. Cummings, Mr. Theodore Distin.; and, as instrumentalists and accompanyists, Mr. Viotti Collins, Master Drew dean, and Mr. Francisco Berger. Amongst those we saw in the announced bills who promised to attend and give their professional assistance on the retirement of an old and respected brother artiste, but who did not do so, we perceived the names of Miss Georgina Stabbach, Miss Lascelles, Miss Laura Baxter, Mr. George Loder, Signor Randegger, a Herr Wilhelm Ganz, and a Signor Fabio Campana, who came and accompanied one or two of the vocal pieces, and then vanished. If those ladies or gentlemen imagine for a moments they add to their consequence and position in the eyes of the public by breaking their word, or showing such a disrespect for what ought to be held sacred amongst honourable persons, they will, perhaps, find out, as many other artists have err this, the consequences of breaking faith with the public and the artiste they pledged their word to. We shall allude no further to this subject, but proceed to notice what was deemed worthy at the above concert. …….We regret to say the hall was not filled, and that Mr. Distin will realise little, if anything, by the proceeds of the concert, which we regret exceedingly.\textsuperscript{824}

1860 February\textsuperscript{825} MR. DISTIN’S FAREWELL CONCERT.

On Wednesday evening, the 1st instant, Mr. Distin, senior, gave a farewell concert at Exeter Hall, indicative, we believe, of his retiring altogether from the musical profession. His name has been most intimately associated with the art of music for so many years, that no one can witness his leaving it without regret; but that regret will be increased tenfold, when it is known that this last concert was a matter of necessity. A tolerably good audience—though not so large as we

\textsuperscript{821} The Era, January 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1860.
\textsuperscript{822} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{823} Ibid., February 5\textsuperscript{th} 1860.
\textsuperscript{824} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{825} The Players, February 13\textsuperscript{th} 1860.
expected, nor as Mr. Distin and the talented artistes engaged deserved—assembled on the occasion. The evening’s performance was of a very high and satisfactory character. Madame Rudersdorf sung Robert toi que j'aime with excellent effect. Madame Catherine Hayes delighted the audience, and brought down thunders of applause with Qui la Voce, and “the Last Rose of Summer.” Miss Maria Stanley, Miss Harrington, Miss Ransford, Miss Susannah Cole, Miss Lascelles, Miss Medora Collins, Mrs. Theodore Distin, Madame Honec, Mr. Henry Percy, Mr. Theodore Distin, Mr. Frank Elmore, and Mr. J. W. Morgan were the other principal vocalists. Mr. Viotti Collins performed a solo on the violin and displayed most remarkable mastery over that instrument; and Master Drew Dean gave several airs on the flute very creditably. At the close Mr. Distin, senior, made his appearance on the platform, and was received with rapturous applause. A gentleman, whose name we did not know, returned thanks for him, and the concert ended.

1860 April. Distin leads the Queen Victoria (Westminster) Band of the Volunteer Rifle Corps Movement

The Queen’s (Westminster) had their first march, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Earl Grosvenor, and the fifteen companies were represented, about six hundred effectives attending. On arriving at Westminster Hall, the general rendezvous, the regiment was introduced for the first time to its band, arranged under the direction of the Messrs. Distin. The regiment formed in line and presented arms, and cheered loudly as the band played the National Anthem.

1860 June. Distin’s Ventil Horn Union concert in St. James’s Hall.

‘The concert opened with the Horn Union, under the direction of Mr. Henry Distin, who played a selection from Verdi’s Nabuco and V. Wallace’s Maritana with such consummate taste and expression as to call forth loud plaudits from the delighted audience.’

1860 July 10th & 11th the first National Brass Band Championships held at the Crystal Palace, London. See Chapter 8 and reports from various newspapers.

1st prize - £40 plus a champion contre-bass in Eb value £35 guineas made by Henry Distin- Black Dyke Mills band.


1860 July. Advert for Weston’s Grand Music Hall.

Mr. Weston has purchased the Great Leviathan Drum of Mr Henry Distin which will be produced in a Grand Selection in act of preparation.’

1860 August 20th Weston’s Music Hall, Holborn, London. Mr Henry Distin’s Great Leviathan Drum will be used.’

1860 Besses ‘o’t’ Barn band

826 The Observer, April 15th 1860.
827 The Era, June 10th 1860.
828 Illustrated News of the World, August 3rd 1861.
829 The Era, July 22nd 1960.

Ray Farr 147
Appendix A

1860 October. An advert in the Daily Telegraph Tuesday 22nd October 1860 announced:

Weston's Music Hall, Holborn, London\(^{30}\) "a second engagement with Mr. H. Distin for his Ventil Horn Union of nine performers who will appear every night at 10 o'clock' (for 7 nights). "A selection from the opera Norma, arranged especially for this establishment by Mr Henry Distin for his Ventil Horn Union and the whole strength of the company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norma</td>
<td>Miss E Pearce (&quot;The greatest English soprano&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollio</td>
<td>Mr Raynor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oroveso</td>
<td>Mr. Huish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"assisted by a chorus of 40 voices' Mr. P. Corri, Musical Director.'

Distin's Ventil Horn Union performances, which were originally scheduled for a run of seven performances was extended.\(^{31}\)


Mr Edward Weston begs respectfully to inform his Patrons and the Public that he has concluded a second engagement with Mr. Henry Distin for his Ventil Horn Union of Nine Performers, who will appear every evening at Ten o'clock. The Grand Opening Night will take place on Monday next, Oct. 27, upon which occasion a selection from the Opera of Norma, arranged especially for this establishment by Mr. Henry Distin for his Ventil Horn Union, and the whole strength of the Company.\(^{32}\)

\(^{31}\) Ibid., January 3\(^{rd}\) 1861.
\(^{32}\) *The Era*, October 21\(^{st}\) 1860.
Appendix A

1860 December 21st (or January 8th 1861) John Distin was appointed Second Lieutenant by the 9th Devon Artillery Volunteers and provided accommodation for him in the new military training camp at Aldershot.

1861 January 3rd, 6th, 10th, 12th, 15th. Distin’s Ventil Horn Union performed a selection from Norma in Weston’s Music Hall, Holborn, London “assisted by a chorus of 40 voices.”

Press announcements for a Christmas Pantomime - hundreds turned away nightly! – the company includes Distin’s Ventil Horn Union, playing a grand selection from Norma, assisted by a chorus of forty voices.

1861 January 3rd On January 5th 1861 at 1pm & 4pm the same group performed at the Crystal Palace and in the evening (7.30) they gave further performances of Norma, again in Weston’s Music Hall, Holborn, London. The concept must have been popular because repeat performances of Norma were given on January 8th, January 10th, January 12th and January 15th.

1861 January 31st. Advert for a concert including Mr. Henry Distin, R.A. The post-nominal letters R. A. identifies a Royal Academian.

1861 February. Grand Concert at St. George’s Hall, Portsea, Mr. Henry Distin R.A. of London proceeded to give the company the greatest treat of the evening, by his admirable solo on the ventil horn. Words cannot express the melodious tone which emanated from this instrument when in the hands of a great master. During the solo the room was hushed in stillness, - not a sound could be heard, save the flowing melody which was poured forth from the instrument in the hands of Mr. Distin, who was ably accompanied by Mr. Bradbear. The tone, execution, and softness developed in the solo, was beyond description. One shout from the audience greeted Mr. Distin at the termination of this performance, which was vociferously encored, when he played “My Lodging is on the cold ground.”

1861 February. Distin’s Ventil Horn Union performed at Weston’s Grand Music Hall, a selection from the opera “Bohemian Girl' Musical Director: Mr. P. Corri.

1861 March 13th Distin’s Ventil Horn Union perform at Weston’s Grand Music Hall.

Mr. Henry Distin’s benefit.

1861 March 30th Review.

833 The Daily Telegraph, January 3rd 1861.
834 Ibid., January 3rd, 6th, 10th, 12th, 15th 1861.
835 Ibid., January 5th 1861.
836 Ibid.,
837 Ibid., January 8th 1861.
838 Ibid., January 10th 1861.
839 Ibid., January 12th 1861.
840 Ibid., January 15th 1861.
841 Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle, January 26th 1861.
842 Ibid., February 2nd 1861.
843 The Era, February 17th 1861.
845 The Era, March 10th 1861.
At the GRECIAN we have had a grand musical entertainment, supported by Mr. Distin’s Ventil Horn Band, with a Ballet.

1861 In praise of Distin’s factory. From The Illustrated News of the World June 15th 1861

ON THE SCIENCE, ART AND IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN THE MANUFACTURE OF BRASS INSTRUMENTS

The manufacture and construction of brass musical instruments has at the present moment become a very considerable branch of a description of trade and manufacture comparatively of a modern date. The attention of talented artists having been directed towards the organisations and improvement of brass instruments for many years throughout the whole continent of Europe, it was not to be supposed that our countrymen would be backward in improving and perfecting many of the improvements put forward by men of genius, who have directed their abilities in that line of art.

The trombone, French horn, and trumpet have been the chief brass instruments used in our orchestras and military bands till a late period. The trumpet used in our orchestras was just the military or cavalry trumpet. In England it was cultivated as early as the time of Purcell, when John Shore, the brother of the celebrated Mrs Cibber, was an eminent performer on it. Purcell, from his admiration of Shores performance on the trumpet, took every opportunity of employing him in the accompaniment of his songs and other theatrical compositions.

Shore lived to a great age, and died in 1753, when he was succeeded by a Valentine Snow, a performer of wonderful powers for whom Handel wrote those passages in his oratorios, which, not withholding the improvement made in the instrument, still demand all the execution of our ablest performers. Snow was peculiarly distinguished by the exquisite beauty of his tone and the firmness of his shake. About the year 1770, improved trumpets were brought from Germany by the brothers Braun, and since that time the old trumpet has disappeared from our orchestras. The trumpet now in use is of a more convenient form than before, and the scale is completed by means of the slide or the valve, by which the column of air in the tube can be lengthened or shortened. Since that period many great performers have appeared, amongst whom may be mentioned the late Mr T Harper and Mr John Distin; both these artists were unrivalled, not only in beauty of tone and in powers of execution, but also in greatness of style. In the power of comprehending and realising the most sublime conception of genius, both those artists may be considered as the founders of the English school of the trumpet; several of our present performers, among others the present Mr B Harper, formed by his father’s instructions, bid fair to preserve the superiority of that school, which has gained a name for itself all over the continent.

Who does not recollect the furore caused by Mr Distins family throughout the kingdom by their performance of the most classical pieces of music, and the rapture with which they were received throughout every town and village in the United Kingdom and the continent? Time, and many other circumstances, having brought their 10,000 performances, which they gave, to a conclusion, the eldest son, Mr Henry Distin, directed his attention to military instrument making, his long and practical experience as a performer, together with his constant and continued intercourse with the leading instrument makers in France, Germany, and Hungary by which he has, by dint of study and perseverance, accomplished and organised a complete system of perfectness in the manufacture of brass instruments, by which unity of tone, together with the chiara obscuro in requisite for the tout ensemble of a grand orchestra is obtained, a desideratum long and devoutly wished for by composers of eminence and bandmasters of great ability. The genre of the bass instrument school is now complete from the D flat small soprano, by which solos and soprano music may be played by performers with every register of scale intervening down to the deepest double bass, perfect throughout.

846 The Players, March 30th 1861.
847 The Illustrated News of the World, June 15th 1861.
For many years has Mr Distin devoted his high abilities to the improvement and perfecting of the different brass instruments used for solo purposes, as well as for orchestral and military ones. That the fruits of his labour have been eminently successful none can doubt. The manufacture of construction of brass instruments of music has for many years been a considerable branch of trade, or we may say science. But whatever this manufacture may have been, it is certain that within the last year its operations have been extended tenfold.

We are not now enlarging a poll upon the scientific improvements which Mr Distin has made or the success he has achieved in that branch of art. We more particularly wish to allude to the praise that is due to him for the personal sacrifices he had made to ensure the comfort of his employés. It is but few employers of labour who study the comfort of their men as Mr Distin does, and it is few, very few, employers who take the same interest in their general welfare. It would be tedious and uncalled for to specify all the technical details for the improvements made by Mr Distin in the manufacture of brass musical instruments, nor perhaps would they be understood by the non professional reader were we to do so. Suffice it to say that his improvements have been adopted by the war office. He has contracted largely for the supply of instruments both to the army and navy at home and abroad. That the brass instruments of Distin therefore are sounding forth the notes of civilisation is beyond doubt.

The engraving of Mr Distins factory in Great Newport Street must speak for itself, and our readers must judge of its dimensions and the comfort ensured to the workmen. The workshop is light and airy, and every requisite for ensuring health and vigour is there to be found for the benefit of the men. That Mr Distin sincerely has the interest of his men at heart will be best illustrated when we state the fact that a capital brass band has been formed from amongst the workmen and that the band of the Victoria Rifles, our ‘crack' volunteer regiment, is formed from the same source. In his establishment there may be found natives of Switzerland, Hungary Italy, France, Germany, and England, mostly men whom Mr Distin has picked out from time to time from the benches of different workshops and whose talent has displayed themselves in their labours.

A visit to Mr Distins establishment would well repay the time, and there can be inspected every step of manufacture from the first formation of the musical wind instruments to its delicate and careful finish, while the energetic and polite attention of the proprietor of his foreman will render easy to the mind the otherwise complicated detail in the maze of which the visitor might be lost.

Henry Distin presented the winning band Saltaire Band, with a contre-bass in Eb with four rotary action cylinders. Value 35 guineas.

1861  August 5th. Henry Distin’s Ventil Horn Union Band performed at Castle Yard, Northern Hay, Exeter. Programme included music by Rossini, Etling, Bosquet and Erkel.

1861  The Distin Factory had its own band that took part in the National Brass Band Contest of 1861. From the Manchester Guardian we read about the “GREAT BRASS BAND CONTEST848 where twenty brass bands competed. On the “THIRD PLATFORM' was a band called Distin’s employees.

1861  August. Fete at Mr. Weston’s private residence ‘The Retreat' in Kentish Town.  
Mr Weston gave a ‘splendid day’s pleasure’ for all the Artistes and Company (the whole of his very numerous company) of the Music Hall in his private residence in Kentish Town.

848 Manchester Guardian, Wednesday July 24th 1861.
…As early as half past nine o’clock a large muster departed on special omnibuses from the Holborn Music Hall, preceded by Mr. Distin’s well-known Ventil-Horn Band, under the personal direction of Mr. Henry Distin himself.

…The band having arranged itself for action, and opened fire with a favourite polka, ‘the music of the many twinkling feet,’ soon proved that dancing under the greenwood tree was as loving a pastime with coy dames and fair maids as in the days of their great-great-grandmas.

…There was a Punch and Judy show on the lawn that met with great success, but the most amusing feature of the day was one not mentioned, by some strange oversight, in the programme. For want of a better name we will call it Blondin Baffled, or, the Ducking-Dolphins of Distin’s pond, the part of the great ropewalker and the principal dolphin being performed by Mr. Distin himself, amid thunders of applause. The plot was worked out as follows. A plank was thrown across the ornamental water, and Mr. Weston opened the piece by carrying Mr. Corri over on his back, challenging any spectator to surpass the experiment. He little knew the quality in the metal of the celebrated instrument maker. Mr. Distin selected one of his band, a young ‘darkey’ of the sounding cymbals. The youth was fairly mounted, and away went the intrepid performer on his perilous journey, amid the breathless silence of his smiling auditory. He had nearly reached his destination, when, by a little overbalancing play that does him great credit as an amateur, feinting, first on one side, and then on another, he finally plunged with his alarmed, helpless burden into the cool translucent waves below. At this event the cheering rose high, and was long, loud and uproarious. Nor was the acting of young ebony less meritorious. As soon as the grand pas de tumble commenced, it was really a treat to see the way in which he clutched the master, digging his fingers into him for the dear life, whilst the look of ghastly, bleak despair, as he gazed on the watery gulph beneath, just before the final capsize was given, was worthy of Othello; and his heart-piercing scream of “All is lost now!” as he fell headlong from his seat, made a most profound impression on the spectators. “What talent!” exclaimed one, “Who expected it?” said another, and the laughter and cheers resounded on all sides as the dolphins continued to plunge about in their new native element. And thus the sports and pastimes continued all the live-long day.849


A grand morning performance will be given at Weston’s Music Hall on Wednesday next, on which occasion the children of that excellent Institution, the Licensed Victuallers’ School, have been kindly invited by the charitable proprietor to enjoy the great musical treat that will be placed before them. ……Mr. Henry Distin, with his Ventil Horn Union Band, twenty five in number, will further appear on the occasion.850

1861 October. Distin Employees Band.

In addition to this Mr. Henry Distin, the celebrated musical instrument manufacturer was in attendance with his own band, composed of the workmen employed in his establishment.851

1861 October. Distin’s Ventil Horn Union (25 in number) performed at Weston’s Music Hall.

The Band and Chorus will include 44 performers and the whole will be under the direction of Mr. P. Corri.852

1861 The 1861 National Census shows John Distin’s (at aged 68) occupation as Professor of Music, 18, Wellington Street, Aldershot, Hants, which is where John came to retire.

1862 January. Advertisements in Leeds Mercury

849 The Era, September 1st 1861.
850 The Era, October 6th 1861.
851 The Era, October 13th 1861.
852 The Era, October 6th 1861.
Distin’s Monster Circular Contrabass in E flat. Ventil Horns, Cornets, Sax Horns, Drums and Fifes, are cheaper than any other house in the Trade, made at Henry Distin’s Manufactory, 9 and 10, Great Newport-street, St. Martin’s-Lane, London, where fifty men can be seen at work.

Distin’s Brass Band Instruments and Fifes and Drums are cheaper and easier to play, perfectly in tune, and better made, than by any other house in the Trade.853

1862 The Henry Distin company had grown to fifty workers

1862 May- November. The International Exhibition or Great London Exposition, was held in South Kensington, London.

Henry Distin’s exhibition stand was larger than any other musical manufacturer and comprised of, a pair of silver kettledrums, a colossal Eb contra bass and a monstre gong drum.

Amongst the greatest attraction in the fine arts (musical) department of the Exhibition will be the ‘trophy’ of Mr. Henry Distin, the renowned musical instrument manufacturer. It comprises some superb specimens of workmanship; the most striking of which is the magnificent pair of silver kettledrums, manufactured at a cost of 590 guineas for the 3rd Light Dragoons, and kindly lent by the commanding officer of that regiment. At the back is a colossal Eb contrabase, plated in silver; and the whole is overshadowed by the monster gong drum, manufactured for the Handel Festival. Mr. Distin having had a larger space allotted to him than any other musical instrument manufacturer in the world, his display will be proportionately more extensive and brilliant.854

1862 July. Distin performance at Kensington Museum855

The crowds on Wednesday night were regaled with performances by the National Choral Society and Distin’s Horn Union...

1862 August 9th856 Report from the Cassell’s Illustrated Family Paper Exhibitor on the International Exhibition.

MR. DISTIN’S SAX HORNS.
EVER and anon, amid the sounds of music from the crowd of pianos in the Exhibition, will be heard the long, clear, piercing, beautiful note of a single instrument, which is heard from end to end of the building. It is the call of one of the Sappers and Miners, and is produced from one of Distin’s famous brass horns. Without entering minutely into the theory or science of acoustics, it is well known that the manufacture of wind instruments has really become a “fine art,” based upon essentially scientific acoustic principles. Men very early discovered a mode whereby they could produce sounds in imitation of and differing from their own voices by means of artificial appliances. The feathered songster created the idea of music, and then the instrumentalist began his work. To quote a writer of the early part of the present century: “As the materials of music had birth with Nature herself, so their employment is the production of melody was divided by the earliest race of man.”

One of the largest and perhaps best show-cases in the Exhibition of Art and Industry is that of Messrs. H. Distin and Co., of Great Newport Street, Leicester Square. In it may be seen some of the finest specimens of brass and silver instruments exhibited by the British manufacturer. Some very highly-finished specimens of the Koenig horn, the saxophone, the cornet, and the ventil horn are placed in this case; which

853 Leeds Mercury, January 29th 1862.
854 Bristol Mercury, April 26th 1862.
855 The Observer, July 13th 1862.
856 Cassell’s Illustrated Family Paper Exhibitor, 1862.
instruments we are induced to illustrate, and to state that their prices are more moderate than any instruments of the kind we have yet seen.

It is an interesting fact to notice the steady increase of talent in this branch of trade, while it will be well remembered that but few years have elapsed since all our brass musical instruments were made on the Continent: we may say every improvement that was introduced into them came from abroad. The wonderful appliances of mechanical power are in this branch of manufacture very great. They enable the instrument-maker to supply the public at a very much lower rate than he could do some few years since. Indeed, the advances in them are so great, that we are induced to give our readers an outline of their mode of manufacture.

The manufacturer commences with a mere sheet of brass, which, passing under the machine, is out into the requisite size to make the tubing. The strip of metal is then turned in the shape of a pipe, until the edges meet closely. In this form it is submitted to the action of the brazing-forge, and the edges become literally welded together. The next operation is "pickling," in a chemical bath, in order to clean the metal from the effects of the brazing. The crude instrument now passes on to an upright "draw-bench," worked by a chain, strap, and fly-wheel; this is to make it perfectly cylindrical inside and out. The mandril is passed through a thick steel plate, closely fitting it; the wheel is set in motion by the tremendous power of the "draw;" the mandril, with the tube on it, is pulled through perfectly straight in its length, and completely round in its form. The next thing is to bond the tube into the various curves required, either in a ventil horn or cornet, at the same time that the cylindrical form is maintained. The bending and twisting of these tubes, without flattening or breaking then, has always puzzled the uninitiated. We will explain why. If a tube has only to receive a gentle curve, it is filled with melted pitch. When the pitch hardens it gives "body" to the tube, prevents indentations in the bending, and is easily taken out by remelting. When, however, the bend is very sharp, like the "crank" or "crooks" resembling the letter U, pitch will not answer. In some cases molten lead is poured into the straight tube, and allowed to cool; by its affinity for brass it is capable of being turned to any form. When the desired shape has been arrived at, as lead melts at a much lower temperature than brass, the tube is placed under the influence of an adjusted flame, and the lead very readily pours out of the tube, leaving its brass skin in all its purity and beauty of form. In the end or "bell" of the instrument, some of which are twelve inches in diameter at the mouth, the edges of the pattern from the sheet brass are first brought together in the way described for the straight tubes, but the "bells" are not placed in the draw-bench. They are placed upon mandrils of their own particular shape, and carefully hammered until the gauge pronounces them of "perfect fit." The common blow-pipe is now a valuable agent. A small jet of gas, the mouth of the blow-pipe behind it, the foot on the treadle of the hollows, and a white heat may be obtained in a very few seconds. With respect to the very small shanks, they are fitted into a die and stamped up at once. The straight and curved pieces are next given out to the various workmen to fit up for their respective uses. When each has done that which is required of him, he passes the work on to the next man, whose duty it is to continue it; and thus it proceeds until the instrument is so far advanced as to require the mouthpiece. This important part, as well in the manufacture as its use, is at first a piece of rough, unshapen brass or silver; but, with the aid of the lathe, it soon assumes its required form. The construction of this portion of the instrument is comparatively simple. Crooks, shanks, pistons, slides, springs, bells, mouth-pieces, and all are now placed in the hands of the fitter, who soon converts that which but a few hours before was a piece of flattened metal into a cornet, or other instrument of elegant form, ready to discourse sweet music for many a day to come. After the instrument has passed the hands of the fitter, it is "put to the test," and soon receives the stamp and other marks, to notify its capability of action or use, though not, of course, finished sufficiently for the educated eye of a musician. It now, therefore, undergoes the process of polishing, which is too simple to require any description. Now it is again sent for examination, and is tried most carefully, in competition of tone, with an old instrument. The highly practised ear of a musician soon pronounces it perfect or defective, as the case may be, in tone and register. This ordeal is the last; and the instrument is now placed in the show-case, to await its future master—the whole process having been performed in as little time as, a few years back, was required by an English firm to manufacture one bend of an instrument. Such is an outline of the mode of melting brass instruments in the present day, and according to the most improved method. Brief as this description is, it will show how wonderful is the march of knowledge since that instrument of antiquity, the "tibia," was constructed out of the leg bone of an ox. The form of this musical instrument was very similar to the present flute, having keys on its side. Two of these instruments were often played at once, the cheeks of the performer being strengthened by a leathern mouth-piece being fastened round the face. Look, then, for one moment at the beautiful finish and elegant design of the flute now in use; and on attentively considering the progress of
the arts and manufactures of England, we cannot fail to notice the many adverse circumstances of its past career.

The proprietors of the large manufactory whence all these beautiful horns and other brass instruments come have carried modern improvements to such perfection, that they have been honoured by a recommendation from his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge expressed in circular memorandum to the army at home and abroad, relating chiefly to a very valuable invention, called "Distin’s Patent Chromatic Attachment," by which the ordinary field bugle can instantaneously be converted into a soft-toned, pleasing instrument, possessing all the variety of the cornet-a-piston. Since the establishment of our numerous army of patriotic volunteers, a new epoch in the history of instruments of martial music has been initiated. Some idea can be formed of the great increase in this branch of trade, when we state that in little more than twelve months, over one thousand pounds have been expended by Messrs. Distin in the purchase of silver for the manufacture of volunteer bugles. This item will prove how, by the aid of invention, manufacturers are enabled to increase tenfold the wile of articles which would, from their immense cost, lie alone within the reach of the rich, instead of the million, as they now do.

The case of Mr. H. Distin and Co. will be found in the centre of the Musical Court, on the north side of the Nave, next the Centre Avenue, immediately opposite the Jewelry Department.

1862 July Zoological Gardens Bristol

Band Contest at the Zoological Gardens. At this season, when one-half of the population are at the seaside and well nigh the other half in attendance at the National Exhibition and other sights of the great Metropolis, amusements come to us "like angel visits – few and far between." This week, thanks to the indefatigable caterer, Mr. Enderby Jackson, we have had a grand Band Contest at the Zoological Gardens, Clifton, at which some 9,000 or 10,000 persons were present. Several Bands competed playing a waltz composed by Mr. Jackson for the occasion, and so arranged as to test the skill and powers of the several Bands. The Prizes were adjudged as follows: First Prize, £12; and a silver baton for the Bandmaster, the Wednesbury Band; second, £9, Band of the 1st Gloucestershire (Bristol) Rifle Corps; their, £5, the Weston Super-Mare band; fourth, £3, Gloucestershire Artillery and Engineers; fifth, £2, the Bradford-on-Avon Band. Besides the special performances of the test composition, the Bands played a number of Selections, and they were likewise combined as one large orchestra, and gave Meyerbeer’s ‘Coronation March,’ Tidman’s
(sic) “General Jackson, ‘Schottische, and the National Anthem. The Concert part of the Festival was greatly enriched by the presence of Mr. Henry Distin, the well-known musical instrument manufacturer, who exhibited and performed on a new soprano horn, a tenor ventil-horn, and one of the largest contra-basses made by him for the Handel Festival. He was greatly applauded, and his execution of the “Huntsman’s Chorus,” from Der Freischutz, on the last-named instrument, without the use of valves, and by the mere power of his lip, excited great astonishment. 857

1862 Advert in Leeds Mercury shows the Distin Manufactory at 9/10, Great Newport Street, St. Martin’s lane, London “where 50 men can be seen at work’. “Instruments are cheaper and easier to play, perfectly in tune, and better made, than by any other house in the Trade. 858

1862 August 11th. Zoological Gardens Bristol

On Monday last the fine band of the London Commissionaires (the “Band of Heroes”) appeared at a fete at our Zoological Gardens. The weather was threatening, which prevented as large an attendance as would doubtless have been otherwise obtained, but there were some thousands present, and the really capital performances of the band afforded great delight to all who heard them. Mr. Henry Distin, the famous horn player, assisted, and gave, with faultless tone and expression, an aria on the tenor ventil horn: he also displayed marvellous skill in the bugle obligato to a couple of waltzes. 859


The Canterbury Music Hall was established in 1852. It was the first purpose-built music hall in London. Ventil Horn Union failed to show up!

857 The Era, July 6th 1862.
858 Leeds Mercury, January 29th 1862.
859 Bristol Mercury, August 16th 1862.
860 The Era, September 7th 1862.
On Friday evening last Messrs. Morton and Stanley did a very graceful and brotherly act to an artist in another profession, which entitles them to the most cordial thanks of the professional, and the approbation of the general public. About three weeks ago Mr. Alfred Sylvester, photographic artist, of New Bond-street, and Clapham, had the misfortune to lose a large and valuable stock at the latter place through a very destructive fire, in consequence of which a Benefit was offered to be organised by him by his more intimate friends, Mr. Henry Distin, the musical instrument manufacturer, of Great Newport-street, taking the lead.…

Distin’s Ventil-Horn Union was then announced, but Mr. Distin came on the stage and made an apologetic speech to the audience, every word of which our reporter took down, but we think we shall best consult the cause of peace, concord, and harmony, the very elements of the Divine Muse, by not publishing it. Seven members of his band, with Mr. Calmar at the pianoforte, very able executed a Rifleman’s Galop, and were enthusiastically encored. Mr. Distin himself executing two beautiful solos, ‘The last rose of summer’ and ‘My lodging is on the cold ground,’ in a splendid manner. 861

1862 November. Distin performance at The Close of the International Exhibition 862

Dr. Chipp, who presided at the organ of Messrs. Foster and Andrews, in the east transept, was accompanied by Distin’s silver sestett band. Their joint performance was highly successful, the combinations of the metallic sounds of the brass instruments with the sonorous roll of the organ was very effective, and was highly applauded. After the National Anthem the performers repeated the “Wedding March,” and a Rifle Galop.” Mr. H. Distin sounding the solo calls, which reverberated again and again to the delight of the assembled thousands in this part of the building.

1863 June 8th. The Musical World published John Distin’s obituary, which states he died in Great Newport St., St. Martin’s Lane, London. 863

The Late Mr. Distin.– Mr. John Distin held a distinguished position as a trumpet player during the last half century. He commenced his career in the band of the South Devon Militia, afterwards joined the Grenadier Guards, and subsequently was appointed principal trumpet in the private band of George 4th, where he continued until the death of that monarch. When the King’s band was broken up, Mr. Distin organised his celebrated quintets of brass instruments in conjunction with his sons, and made many musical tours throughout the United Kingdom, Germany and France, when their performance gained them profit and fame, both from the artistic combination and the novelty produced by the brass instruments, at that period being developed by M. Sax, the inventor and perfector of brass valve instruments. Mr. Distin, as a solo trumpeter had a great reputation. His “Soldier Tired,” as an executive performance, combined with a purity of tone on the instrument, could hardly be surpassed. He was a man highly respected by numerous friends and brother artists, for his many kind, good and amiable qualities.


1863 December 28th Distin performance at Westons 864

The Music Halls: 861

861 *The Era*, October 5th 1862.
862 *The Observer*, November 3rd 1862.
863 *The Musical World*, June 18th 1863.
864 *The Observer*, December 28th 1863.

Ray Farr 157
At Weston’s will be found Distin’s band, the brothers Conrad of wondrous athletic powers, and the everlasting Mackney; the Philharmonic gives a selection from ‘‘The Barber of Seville’’......

1864 June 12\textsuperscript{th} Advertisement shows that Henry Distin used an agent:

Mr. P. Corri’s Agency.- In entering into the above business, Mr. P. Corri trusts that his long experience in the Dramatic and Musical world will enable him to secure the patronage of both Proprietors and Artistes. He now has vacancies in every branch of the Profession. He is Agent for the Canterbury Music Hall, Brighton; the Alhambra Music Hall, Hull; Mr. Henry Distin’s Ventil Horn Union......

1865 June. \textit{The Times} reports the dissolved partnership between H. Distin and Co., Great Newport St., and Aldershot, musical instrument manufacturers.

1865 June. The Ipswich Journal advertises a concert at the Corn Exchange where Henry Distin performed as soloist on the Ventil Horn. Theodore Distin was also on the programme as a vocal soloist.

1865 Black Dyke Band

1865 The Salvation Army was formed around 1865 and has used the medium of brass bands ever since to proclaim its gospel. The Fry family from Salisbury formed the first Salvationist band in 1878. The ensemble was a quartet made up of Fry and his three sons and the idea quickly spread.

\textsuperscript{865} \textit{The Era}, June 12\textsuperscript{th} 1864.
\textsuperscript{866} \textit{The Times}, July 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1864.
\textsuperscript{867} \textit{Ipswich Exchange}, June 10\textsuperscript{th} 1865.
\textsuperscript{868} \textit{The British Brass Band}, 2007.
The first Corps band followed in December by a small band in Consett, County Durham.

For almost a century the Salvation Army produced its own instruments and music, but in the mid-1960s the instrument-manufacturing operation was wound up.

1866 September. Distin Court Case.

John Shearin, (sic) 18, pleaded ‘Guilty’ to stealing three clarinets and other musical instruments, the property of his master, Mr. Henry Distin. The prisoner, having suffered imprisonment for felony, concealed the fact, and became an apprentice to the prosecutor, the well-known musician and musical instrument maker in Great Newport-street, Soho. Shearin admitted having stolen property of the value of 15l. and when apprehended by William Gordon, 33C, he told him that “he was not the worst; there were others in it besides himself.’ Mr. Distin’s loss had been considerable, and he wishes to test the truth of the prisoner’s statement, which implied that others in his employment had been ribbing him. Mr. Serjeant Dowling postponed passing sentence until the next sessions. 869

869 The Times, September 5th 1866.
Appendix A

1866 September. Distin Court Case.

John Shearn, (sic) who was convicted last Sessions of a very extensive robbery of musical instruments from Messrs. Distin, his masters, was brought up for judgement. Police constable Gordon, 33C, had seen the prisoner since his conviction, but although he refused to give him any information he had succeeded in tracing other property stolen from Mr. Distin to the value of 30 pounds. . . .Mr. Serjeant Dowling sentenced him to be imprisoned and kept at hard labour for 18 months. 870

1867 February. Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union perform Her Majesty’s Theatre, St. Martin’s Hall, Royal Alhambra Palace,

Several newspaper advertisements for concerts by Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union with Mr. Levy as cornet soloist – “the most wonderful performer on the cornet in the world or ever known, who will perform on Distin’s celebrated patent light-valved instruments.” 871

1867 February. Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union.

The great Jules Levy not only endorsed Distin’s instruments he formed an alliance with Henry Distin, which followed from the Ventil Horn Union. On Monday February 25th 1867 the announcement appears: “St Martin’s Hall – Popular Promenade Concerts, with novel features, under the management of Mr. F. Strange and the Alhambra Company. Orchestra of fifty performers. Conductor M. Rivière: solo cornet, M. Levy. Brilliant programme. Levy and Distin’s instrumental Union.

Open this evening, begins at eight. Admission is 1s. 872

1867 February 25th Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union.

St Martin’s Hall – Popular Promenade Concerts, with novel features, under the management of Mr. F. Strange and the Alhambra Company (Limited). Orchestra of fifty performers, conductor M. Rivière: solo cornet, M. Levy. Brilliant programme. Levy and Distin’s instrumental Union. Open this evening, begins at eight. Admission is 1s. 873

1867 February 27th Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union.

'T ST. MARTIN’S HALL..TO-NIGHT, at eight. LEVY and DISTIN’S INSTRUMENTAL UNION, first time. 875

ROYAL ALHAMBRA PALACE… Levy and Distin’s grand Instrumental Union.” 876

870 The Times, September 25th 1866.
871 The Daily Telegraph, Feb. and March 1867.
872 Ibid.,
873 Ibid.,
874 Ibid.,
875 Ibid., March 4th 1867.
876 Ibid., March 13th 1867.
1867  February. The Daily Telegraph announces:

Royal Alhambra Palace LEVY, the greatest performer on the cornet ever known, will play
one of his wonderful solos EVERY EVENING, the same as performed by him in all the
principal towns of the United States, France, Great Britain, and Ireland on Distin’s
celebrated patent light-valved instruments.  

1867  March. Performances by the Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union

1867  March Advert, ROYAL ALHAMBRA PALACE.

First appearance of LEVY and DISTIN’S GRAND INSTRUMENTAL UNION, the most
remarkable brass band in England.

1867  “ROYAL ALHAMBRA PALACE.- Band of 60.

1867  April Advert for the Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union at the Royal Alhambra Palace

Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union.  EVERY NIGHT

Band of 60. Levy and Distin’s Instrumental Union. – EVERY NIGHT

1867  May 6th Theodore Distin sings at St James Hall, Piccadilly, London.

1867  The Man that played the Cornet. Song composed by R. Coote (NB the Distin name on the
cornet case)

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877 *The Daily Telegraph*, February 25th 1867.
878 Ibid.,
879 Ibid., March 1st 1867.
880 Ibid., March 2nd 1867.
881 Ibid., March 4th 1867.
882 Ibid., March 11th 1867.
883 Ibid., March 13th 1867.
884 Ibid., April 8th 1867.
885 Ibid., March 25th, 26th, 27th, 29th and 30th 1867.
886 Ibid., April 1st 1867.
887 Ibid., April 8th 1867.
888 Ibid., Telegraph, April 1st 1867.
889 *The Times*, April 30th 1867.
1867  Exposition Universelle.

The exposition was formally opened on April 1, and closed on October 31, and was visited by 9,238,967 persons, including exhibitors and employees. This exposition was the greatest up to its time of all international expositions, both with respect to its extent and to the scope of its plan.

1867  At the great Paris Exposition (Exposition Universelle (1867) Henry Distin met Carl Fischer who was assisting with the brass exhibits. Distin offered Fischer a position in his London firm, which he took. After a few years as head of the firm branches, Fischer
emigrated to America in 1872 where he became one of the leading publishers of band and orchestral music.  

1867 August 16th Advert:

The Courtois Brass Band Union will perform a selection from Robert Le Diable expressly composed for them by Mr. J. Waterson BM 1st Life Guards.

1868 February 23rd Henry Distin appeared as Tenor Cor soloist at St James’s Hall.

1868 Distin performance at The Alexandra Palace

Yesterday afternoon some three or four hundred gentlemen connected with architecture and fine arts, as well as with great commercial speculations, and more especially with the sporting world, assembled at the Alexandra Palace, Muswell Hill, for the purpose of inspecting that magnificent building ....... The acoustic properties of the building, which were yesterday tested by a band of musicians, under the direction of Mr. Theodore Distin, specially engaged for the purpose, left nothing to be desired in that respect. Indeed, so perfect is it, that a solitary cornet played under the centre of the great dome by Mr. Distin was heard distinctly throughout every part of the building.

1868 The Distin Company was sold to Boosey who used Distin's name for their new acquisition. At first they called their company "Distin & Co." and then the "Distin Military Musical Instrument Manufactory," publishing their own journal, Distin's Brass Band Journal. Henry was not allowed to make instruments with his name on them within 100 miles of London.

1868 June 19th Boosey & Co.

The Boosey family had emigrated to England from France in the first half of the fifteenth century and the firm was originally started in 1792 by Thomas Boosey (Sr.). He began by selling imported scientific and educational books, and soon thereafter, music-books and scores. From 1816 to 1854, the company was known as Thos. Boosey & Co. and during this time, in 1851, the firm began to manufacture instruments. For ten years, beginning in 1854, the company was known as Boosey & Sons and for the rest of the nineteenth century, the company was known as Boosey & Co. On June 19th 1868 Distin & Co. was sold to Boosey & Co. Instrument Company for £9,700 but continued production as “Distin & Co.” until 1874 when the Distin name was dropped. David James Blaikley (1846-1936) was appointed works manager.

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891 The Daily Telegraph, August 16th 1867.
892 The Era, Feb. 23rd 1868.
893 The Observer, April 26th 1868.
894 Newsome, Roy, Brass Roots (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998)
In 1874, David James Blaikley, Boosey’s chief instrument maker, designed the compensating valve system. This was patented in 1878 and has since become the standard for valve manufacture. The sale of the Distin Company was conditional on Distin agreeing not to manufacture under his own name within 100 miles of London.895

From the DISTIN & CO ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS at Horniman Museum Library we learn: ‘When the factory and stock were purchased by Boosey & Co, the operations were not immediately integrated, but were conducted as separate businesses for nearly six years. The Distin & Co stock books record numerous items ‘sold’ to Boosey & Co, and the Boosey & Co stock books from 1868 to 1874 record a number of items ‘sold’ to Distin & Co. There were very few sales in the Distin & Co stock books recorded to overseas customers, so it is probable that Boosey & Co (then at 24 and 28 Holles Street) quickly took over handling the exports of Distin instruments.’896

Henry Distin writes: ‘(he) imagined that he could retire from business, settle down, and rest. That, however, was just what an active man of his active temperament could not do. In a short time he lost $10,000, by an unsuccessful concert speculation on a gigantic scale at the Agricultural Hall, London, and shortly after, by indorsement (sic) for a friend, lost $30,000, so that he found himself, when past middle age mulcted of the savings of his long years of hard work, almost as poor as he had been thirty years before, and compelled to commence life over again.’897

‘In this emergency an evil fate tempted him to try keeping an hotel in Antwerp, Belgium, and that finished his resources so completely that he had to borrow money from one of his own waiters to get back to London.’897

After a few unsuccessful entrepreneurial efforts Henry Distin was successful in “getting up a grand military musical festival at the Alexandra Palace, at which ten military bands were assigned to by personal favour of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.”898

897 The British Bandsman, March 1889.
898 Ibid.,
1868 Using the Distin name Boosey & Co. produced a brass band journal in 1868 called, "Distin’s Brass Band Journal, January 1869."

1869 In 1869 The St Hilda Band, from South Shields, was formed. This band had a significant impact on music making and banding in the North East of England at the turn of the century.
1870 *The Ballad Horn*

After Distin’s Ventil horns came three instruments, which enjoyed limited success: The Koenig horn, the tenor cor and the ballad horn with its upward facing bell. Langwill says, “around 1870, Distin ‘invented’ the Ballad Horn, a circular instrument in C. Its purpose was to enable amateurs to play directly from the voice part of songs without transposing.” Anthony Baines also gives credit to Distin for the invention of the ballad horn.

The tenor Cor was designed by Distin just prior to selling his business and a description of the instrument was given in Distin’s 1869 catalogue.


- The Exiles Song of Home
- I’m a Fisherman Bold
- The Miller’s Maid

The three songs show a decided power for the invention of melody.

1871 Henry Distin was working as a publican and living with his brother, Theodore, as he had recently been declared bankrupt.

1873 June 22nd there was a complimentary benefit concert at The Royal Music Hall in London for Henry Distin “who recently returned to England after four years residence on the continent. Mr. Henry Distin, who received a cordial greeting, beautifully rendered a couple of familiar airs on “Dupont’s Tenor Corno’. Mr. P. Corri presided in his usual bland manner.”

1873 Sept. 14th Henry Distin appeared as soloist at the Royal Surrey gardens.

1874 Adverts:

Distin Brass Band Instruments are manufactured exclusively by Boosey & Co of 195, Regent Street, London.

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901 *The Musical Times*, April 1st 1870.
902 *The Era*, June 22nd 1873.
903 Ibid., September 14th 1873.
1876 May. Mr Henry Distin’s Festival

Alexandra Palace- Mr. Henry Distin who is about departing for America, will give a grand vocal and instrumental concert at the Alexandra Palace on Monday next, in which several well-known and popular singers and instrumental performers will appear, together with the entire band of the Coldstream Guards and nine other military bands.  

3pm, Central Hall: Grand Concert, with Madame Edith Wynne, Madame Liebhart, Miss Josephine Pulham, Miss Bessie Stroud, Miss Emily Dones, Miss Kate Wild, Mr Vernon Rigby, Mr G.T. Carter, Mr A. Lester, Mr Selwyn Graham, Mr Henry Guy, Mr Theodore Distin and Mr Chaplin Henry (vocal) and the Orpheus Glee Union. Also, Miss Alice Sydney Burvett (piano), Monsieur Bonnisseau (flageolet), Mr J. Harington Young (piccolo), Mr S. Hughes (ophicleide), Mr Thomas Harper (trumpet), Mr J. Harvey (trombone), Mr H. Distin (Horn?), Mr F. Macgrath (cornet) and Mr S. Hughes (ophicleide), accompanied by Mr W. Ganz, Mr Michael Watson and Mr Frederic Archer.  

Military band performances: 8th Hussars, 6th (Mr Manfelsdorp), 10th (T. Rubel), 16th, 48th and 106th Regiment (Mr H. Newstead), 5th Royal Irish Lancers (Mr Fraying), London Scottish R.B. (Louis Beck), 9th Middlesex Rifles (W.B. Froggitt) and Coldstream Guards (Fred Godfrey).

1876 July. Henry Distin emigrated to America. After seeing the building of Martin’s brass instrument factory on Courtland Street, New York, Henry Distin emigrated to the United States ‘to help plan and superintend Martin’s ‘monster musical instrument factory’ (Farrar 1984). Langwill gives the date, for Henry and his son’s emigration to New York, as June 1877. “He set up shop at 79 East 4th Street (then 285 and 355 Bowery). Langwill gives the emigration date as: June 1877 and from 1878 shared a workshop with F.W. BUSCH in New York and produced instruments under the name: 'Henry Distin, Maker.'

1878 Henry Distin was professionally associated with F. W. Busch and Slater was making Distin instruments, under Henry's supervision, beginning in 1881.

1878 Alto horn with 7 bells made by Henry Distin

Appendix A


The Distin Brass Band Journal, sixth year.

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906 Concert programmes, a world wide web source accessed April 2009.
907 Freemans Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser, July 7th 1876.
909 Ibid.,
910 Ibid.,
By 1880 Distin was importing instruments for J.W. Pepper of New York and Philadelphia, and in the summer of 1882 he moved to Philadelphia to help Pepper establish a factory. Pepper, however, wished to sell cheaply to a mass market, so Distin, whose interest was in high-quality instruments, formed a partnership with Senator Luther R. Keefer and other businessmen to establish the Henry Distin Manufacturing Co. (2 March 1886).

The factory, in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, produced Distin instruments in substantial numbers until February 1909, when Brua C. Keefer sr purchased the company. Keefer replaced Distin’s name with his own, but instruments modelled on Distin’s were manufactured until about 1940. From 1884 to 1888 Distin published music and sold instruments in Philadelphia, first at 917 Filbert Street and then at 913 Arch Street. From 1889 he and his son William Henry, also an instrument maker, lived in Williamsport, but in 1890 Distin vested all rights with the company and retired to Philadelphia with a pension. \(^9\)

From 1881 Slater advertised “Distin’ instruments made under his supervision in a new steam powered factory and in the same year Distin instruments were represented at the New York Exposition. \(^9\) In 1882 Distin patented the 'telescope cornet' and in 1882, Henry moved to Philadelphia and was employed with his son William Henry Distin, by J. W. Pepper in building a new plant for them. \(^9\)
1881 August. Article on Distins appears in New York Times.

THE FAMED DISTIN FAMILY
The New York Times August 7, 1881

CAREER OF THE GREAT HORN AND SAXOPHONE QUINTET.
INVENTION OF THE KEYED BUGLE--ROYAL PRODIGALITY AND ECONOMY--THE
SAXOPHONES--TAKING PARIS--CONCERNING SOME AUTOGRAPHS--IN AMERICA--A CONCERT
IN A BARN--AN ARMY OF 150,000 'WIND JAMMERS.'

After the close of the regular evening concert in a certain up-town 'garden' a few nights since, a couple of weary reporters, who were indemnifying themselves with rest and beer for the heat and burden of their busy day, heard with some surprise the breaking forth of a new burst of music from a single instrument—a 'melody horn'—from which flowed a rapid succession of full, round, and beautiful tones, instantaneously followed by an echo effect repeating these tones seemingly at a great distance, but as clearly and purely as if from nature's own mysterious answering voice. The numerous visitors still lingering in the fast darkening hall or on their way to the door, broke forth into hearty applause. Again and again clearly and purely as if from nature's own mysterious answering voice. The numerous visitors still instantaneously followed by an echo effect repeating these tones seemingly at a great distance, but as clearly and purely as if from nature's own mysterious answering voice. The numerous visitors still lingering in the fast darkening hall or on their way to the door, broke forth into hearty applause. Again and again were sounded out with charming skill runs, flourishes, signal-calls, and snatches of familiar melodies, each followed by that exquisitely delicate and perfect echo. The only persons present who were not delighted were the sleepy waiters, and even they were almost charmed into amiability. Enquiry developed the fact that the maker of the music was the famous Henry Distin, who was taking that opportunity to exhibit to a couple of professional friends the capabilities of a new attachment for cornets and horns which he has just invented, the first completed model of which was that he was trying on the 'melody horn.'

And that reminded one of the reporters that Henry Distin is one of the last surviving members of one of the most talented and famous musical families upon record—a family the name of which three-quarters of a century ago was a household word throughout Europe, the members of which were, for their art, favourites with a fine-assorted lot of sovereigns, and who were intimately connected with the progress of musical art in this country more than 30 years ago. There is a gentleman up in Westchester County who possesses a blue and white Nottingham ware mug for which Col. Kane has vainly offered $50. By and by it will be worth ten times that amount in the valuation of antiquarian collectors of pottery. Its five faces represent in alto-relievo excellent portraits of John Distin and his four sons, the famous horn quintet. Already those mugs, once very common in England, have begun to be marked down by collectors as 'curious and rare,' and, so far as is known, there are only two of them in this country—one in the hands of the gentleman who values it at more than $50, and the other in the hands of Henry Distin, to whom it is beyond price. Henry Distin is now 62 years old, but as active, energetic, and purposeful as most men of 40, with a memory of details, dates, and names through all his long public career which is simply overwhelming. Hunting him up the next day after that supplemental concert, and getting him started talking, the reporter obtained the following interesting story.

'My father, John Distin, was born in 1798, in Plympton, Devonshire, England. At 11 years of age, he, accompanied by a brother two years younger, appeared in public in a flute duet at a concert given by the band of the South Devon Militia, and not only achieved a great popular success, but so impressed the band-master of the regiment that he obtained their enlistment as band-boys under his instruction. Two years later, John’s ability as a performer on the chromatic trumpet was already a matter of public fame, and at the age of 14 he played first trumpet in a performance of the Dettingen Te Deum at a grand musical festival in Exeter so successfully that he was presented with £10 as a reward. That sum, which was a fortune for a boy of his age, indirectly cheated him out of the honour of being the inventor of the keyed bugle and came near losing his life. Just about that time the regimental band with which he was connected was supplied with new bugles and, in the work of testing them, to which John Distin was assigned by the Band-master, he found one through which a hole had been punched by the careless driving of a nail in the box inclosing them. That hole gave another note. Stopping it with his finger, he made the instrument sound like all the others. That accidentally discovered note suggested to him an idea. The old bugles of the band were auctioned off, and he, purchasing one of them, set to work cutting holes in it, and fitting them with corks to find new notes. Only one member of the band, named John Tucker, was taken into his confidence. Guy Fawkes day, an anniversary then celebrated with much explosive demonstration, was drawing near, and some of the band-boys who had picked up a lot of blank cartridges after a review, appealed to John as a capitalist-in virtue of that gift of £10-to buy two pounds of powder and join them in getting up a quantity of squibs and other fire-works for the celebration. He did so. While they were all at work making their squibs, a mischievous boy touched off a cartridge, which exploded all the rest of the powder almost under Distin’s nose, and injured him so severely that he was laid up for three months in the hospital. When he was
convalescing, John Tucker came to him and said ‘Ah, I am so sorry, John, but an Irishman named Halliday, has got ahead of you on your invention while you have been laid up. He has produced a three-keyed bugle, which has been highly approved of by the Duke of Kent, and it is already making a great effect as the ’Kent bugle.’ The boy’s disappointment was very keen, but he subsequently earned some distinction for himself by adding two more key to the Kent bugle, making a new instrument as far ahead of Halliday’s as that, when invented, was an improvement upon the common field bugle, and this perfected instrument was christened the ‘Royal Kent bugle.’

‘After the completion of his term of seven years’ apprenticeship to the South Devon Band-master, John Distin went up to London and enlisted for a term of seven years in the Grenadier Guards band, and there achieved much fame as a performer on his improved bugle, which was still an unknown instrument upon the Continent. When the allied armies entered Paris after the battle of Waterloo, the band of the British Grenadier Guards was in the great column of Soldiers that marched in review before the grand stand where the Duke of Wellington, the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, and several members of the French royal family were. The Grand Duke Constantine, who had a keen ear for music, appreciated highly the fine playing of the Guards band, but was especially impressed with, and had his most lively curiosity awakened by, the keyed bugle played by John Distin and caused the player and his instrument to be brought before him. Distin could talk neither Russian nor French, so, to act as interpreter for him, took along to the august presence one of two colored time-beaters, dressed in gorgeous Oriental costume, who were a novel feature of the band. The colored man was quite an intelligent fellow, who spoke French well, and through him the Grand Duke carried on an animated and protracted talk with Distin about the new instrument, at the close of which he desired that one should be procured for him. This Distin was fortunately able to effect, and the Grand Duke ordered one of his attendants to pay for it and also to make the bugler a handsome present.

Then, taxing his English, his Highness said: ‘I go tomorrow to Russia.’ Shaking hands warmly with Distin, and afterward shaking the colored man’s hand also.

Free at length of military duty after the expiration of the seven years of his enlistment, John Distin settled down in London, playing in concerts, teaching the trumpet and bugle, and assuming new cares as a family man, when, by special invitation of the Duke of Kent, at the instance of his Majesty George IV., he became a member of the private band of the King at the Court at Windsor as trumpet-player and solo bugle-player, a position which he held, enjoying especial favor of the King, until the Monarch’s death. But when William IV ascended the throne—although it is affirmed that upon his death-bed the old King said to him, ‘Take care always of my old servants, especially of my band,’ and he faithfully promised to so do—an order was issued for the immediate discharge of the band, which numbered 60 men. That was in 1829. So mean was the new regime that the members of the band were called upon to give up their uniforms, which were very gorgeous and costly. The coats were heavy with solid gold lace in such quantity that they had cost 75 guineas each. John Distin rebelled against that order and counseled his comrades to resist it. ‘We have been shamefully treated,’ said he, ‘for not only hath the King, in violation of his word caused our sudden discharge, but he hath made no provision for us by pension or otherwise, and, to some of us at least, this is a great hardship. Let us stand together and refuse to give up the coats. If they tear them from us we will appeal to the justice and sympathy of the people of England, which will be worth to us more than many golden coats.’ The Lord Chamberlain not only withdrew the demand for the coats, but, in lieu of a pension, caused the members of the band to be paid from £250 to £500 each, according to their years of service, and so stopped the scandal which John Distin was already organizing of public concerts by the ex-royal band, (which the old King had never allowed to be heard in public.) Distin sold the gold from his coat for 25 guineas.

‘Having embarked his second and third sons, Henry and William, in a musical career under the best auspices—Lord Westmoreland having assumed all the expenses of their education in the Royal Academy of Music—and put his eldest son, George, upon trial to the jeweler’s trade, John Distin thought to settle down in London, but in six months became weary of the fatigues of London life, accepted the position of Band-master for the Marquis of Breadalbane, at Loch Tay, in the Highlands of Scotland, and proposed to his boys that they should all accompany him there, a proposition which they gladly accepted. While in that position, at Taymouth Castle, he organized the famous horn quintet of himself and sons, which was destined to in a short time achieve a world-wide fame. The first public appearance of the quintet was at the Adelphi Theatre, Edinburgh, where they went for one night, and so took the public by storm that they were retained, by successive engagements for six weeks, becoming finally the recipients of a complimentary banquet tendered them by the press and leading public men of the city. Thence they traveled through all the principal towns of Scotland, giving concerts, down to Liverpool, and thence to Birmingham, where Mr Distin met with an accident so severe as to disable him for two months. Then they resumed their concert tour, going to Bath, and finally back to London. That was in 1837. While giving concerts in Willis’s rooms Mr Distin was called upon to perform the duties of principal trumpeter at the coronation of Queen Victoria, a duty which he had discharged when William IV ascended the throne.
In 1844, after seven years of highly successful concert-giving throughout the United Kingdom, the Distin quintet went to Paris. As a little illustration of the difference between the prices musical artists commanded then on the Continent and what they get now, it is worthy of mention that the Distins were glad to get an engagement at a Paris theatre, for one month, seven performances per week, for 3,000 francs, equivalent to about $25 per week each. Henry Distin was by that time desirous of settling down in London as a manufacturer of brass musical instruments, and with a view to that and employed all his spare time going about with an interpreter among all the makers of Paris, seeing their instruments and learning all he could about their manufacture. After the engagement at the theatres was over the quintet played one night at a grand concert given by a famous singer, upon which occasion they heard for the first time a new instrument called the 'saxophone,' played by a French artist. 'What is that?' demanded Henry, struck at once by the remarkable purity and sweetness of tone of the new instrument. 'Oh, that don’t amount to anything,' replied the interpreter. 'It is some new-fangled thing gotten up by a little manufacturer whom I have not thought worthy of introduction to your notice.' 'Yes! Well we will go to him early tomorrow morning; the first thing,' ordered Distin. When he saw Mr. Sax he found that that 'little manufacturer,' who has since achieved such world-wide celebrity as to overshadow all who were then his rivals, had only completed three instruments as models—a soprano E, contralto B flat, and alto Eb—and had not yet any for sale. Henry Distin made an arrangement for the loan of the three a sort of enthusiasm. Mr. Sax readily agreed to complete the necessary instruments, on the same principle, for the quintet, and as soon as sufficient practice in their use had been attained they were brought out in public. The first time they were so performed upon was in a grand concert at the Opera Comique, given by Mr. Berlioz, the famous composer. The quintet then played a selection from 'Robert le Diable,' upon saxophones in such style that they were engaged to perform at the Conservatoire, and by the committee of that institution were awarded a silver medal.

From that time the Continental tour of the Distins was a succession of triumphs. The press lauded them; the public were enthusiastic in their plaudits; Louis Philippe, presented them with a set of solid silver saxophones; the Société des Beaux Arts awarded them a silver medal; they had an engagement of three months at Baden-Baden; the Grand Duke had them give private concerts at Carlsruhe, and supplied them with an autograph letter of recommendation to Queen Victoria. When they returned to England they had a huge volume of letters of compliment, endorsements, and commendation from the most prominent men of that day.

‘That volume Mr. Henry Distin still retains and even the chirography upon its pages is interesting. What an abominable hand the great composer Meyebel wrote on April 3, 1846. He used a broad-nibbed pen, bore down hard on it, never allowed a curve where he could work in an angle and in a general way seemed to add new terrors to the awful German language. Looking at the signature, we find why he saved out all the curves from the body of the letter. He needed them all to put into the preposterous spiral spring of a flourish which surrounds his name. J. Strauss, Kapellmeister of the Grand Duke of Baden, made almost as bad a looking page. Almost every letter was made to stand separate from its fellows and those on the ends of words had to support the weight of big, ridiculous flourishes every here and there. The signature is open to grave suspicions that it is written in Greek. Lord Westmoreland, the English Ambassador at Berlin in 1846, wrote a rapid, but exceedingly accurate, hand, rather dainty for a statesman without any shading, very small letters, and finished off his signature with a straight little dash under the name, as if he had been marking it up for italics. Herr Weiprecht, conductor of the military music of Prussia, wrote a round, flowing hand, with many flourishes, upon which he bore down earnestly as if with some vague idea of originality in emphasis.

‘George Muller, one of the most famous of Germany’s players of brass, wrote a hand that looked like copper-plate in the accuracy of its formation of letters and perfection of shading. J. B. Arban, the celebrated composer, though his letter is of a much later date, no further back than 1864, is represented in this book, and appears to have turned out the most lady-like bit of chirography in the lot.’

To continue the story: the Continental reputation of the Distin quintet preceded them to England, and upon their return to their native country they were engaged to play repeatedly before the Queen at Windsor Castle, the Duke of Norfolk at Arundel Castle, the Duke of Buckingham at Stow Palace, the Duchess of Kent &c. Upon one of those occasions they performed a piece especially composed for them by Prince Albert, whom they represent as a skilful musician and most courteous gentleman.

After another triumphant tour through the United Kingdom they re-crossed to the Continent, renewed their successes there, and arranged with Mr. Sax for their sale of his instruments in London, where they returned in 1846. In April 1848, George Distin, the eldest of the brothers, died. For several months they did not perform in public, and never again did the Distins appear as a quintet. They could not bear to replace the lost brother by a stranger, and to suit their altered conditions reconstructed all their music for a quartet.
In 1848 they accepted an offer of $12,500, for 40 concerts in the old Park Theatre. New-York, took a farewell benefit concert at the Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane, which netted them £500 - a splendid result to a single performance in those days - and after a tempestuous ocean voyage arrived in New-York on Jan.1st, 1849, only to learn that the Park Theatre had been destroyed by fire, and that they were out of an engagement. That was but the beginning of a series of misfortunes which seemed to cling to them as long as they were in this country, not to the injury of their great artistic reputation, but to the exceeding damage of their anticipated financial success. They made arrangements for a concert tour of the United States, and had give one concert in Boston, for which they received $500, when all further proceedings were stopped by Henry Distin contracting a violent quinsy, which laid him up at the Astor House for three months and came near to taking his life. In April, he had so far recovered that they could set out upon the projected concert tour, but the time lost had carried them onto Spring; their route, which had been made up for Winter, was toward the South, and day after day found them advancing to more and more tropical heats, quite beyond anything in their experience or anticipation, and in the face of a great, and to them novel, terror – the cholera. They played in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, Richmond and Petersburg. But by that time they had reached where the cholera prevailed to such an alarming extent that people had no thought of public amusements; reports met them constantly that the dreadful epidemic was worse yet further southward, and they determined to give up their purpose of visiting New-Orleans and return to New-York.

Messrs. French and Heiser had just then fitted up Castle Garden as a grand concert hall and engaged the Distins for a series of concerts there. Their first one, given to an audience of several thousand people, was an unqualified success. The public accepted them enthusiastically, and the press gave them the highest praise. One paper said: ‘They do not play upon the old horns, but upon a lovely instrument invented by an M. Sax, and called after the inventor. The tone is exquisite, and when the different qualities are combined, they produce the most delicious and ravishing harmony.’ From that it would seem that the Distins were the first to introduce the Saxophone to American knowledge, and such is, indeed, said to be the fact. The critic continued: ‘The Distins are perfect masters of the instruments; they have sought and learned the very heart of their mystery and they manage them with the most admirable tact. It is impossible to find fault with their performance, but we might fill a column in their praise. They exhibit in all they do the most refined taste; they throw into their playing deep feeling and beautiful expression, and they never fail in any passage whatsoever, as is the case with most brass instrument players. In short, they exhibit the greatest possible perfection in their art, and the instruments which are the vehicles of their expression are of a character to delight and fascinate all who listen to them.’

The welcome accorded to the Distins by the professional musicians prominent here in those days was as cordial as that given by the press and people. Allen and Harvey B. Dodworth, George Loder, Maretzek, Bochsa, and many others, proved themselves warm friends. Genial old John Brougham, then in his prime, was also one of their most enthusiastic admirers and supporters. All looked flourishing for them, when suddenly, before they could give their second concert at Castle Garden, the Forrest-Macready riot broke forth and all public amusements were for a time suspended.

Canada was the next field in which the Distins tried their fortunes and there, too, fate seemed against them at the outset, for immediately after they had scored one grand success in Montreal the concert hall was burned down before they could appear a second time, and there was no other place there in which they could give a concert. At Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and other Canadian towns, however, they were very successful, and then they again turned their faces towards the United States, in the early part of the month of September. The breaking down of a stage-coach in which they were journeying to the little village of Port Stanley, where they expected to take steam-boat for Buffalo, landing them in that unpromising place at 10 o’clock at night, four hours after the boat had gone. The only inn in the place had no more beds than were required for the accommodation of the proprietor and his family, so that the travelers had to sleep as they best could upon chairs in the parlor. Under such circumstances, it is not strange that Henry Distin was up and out very early the next morning, almost with the dawn, but, early as it was, he found a cheery blacksmith already at work shoeing a horse. The farrier said that he was an Englishman, from Worcester, and was very glad he had come to America, as he could make more money in a day in this country than in a month in England. When he learned that the person with whom he was talking was one of the famous Distin family whom he had heard play in England, he insisted that they should abandon their intention of going to Buffalo that night, and give a concert in Port Stanley instead. Distin protested that the town did not look as if it had 40 inhabitants; that even if it had there was no time to print and publish announcements; that there was no place to give a concert in, &c. But the music-loving farrier had an answer for everything. They could play in a big empty barn near at hand, which would be fitted up with benches during the day by the half-dozen men he had at work making wagons; he would answer for making the event known in good time without any printing, and, finally, he would guarantee $50, enough, at least, to pay their expenses, if they would stop and play. The Distins consented to do so. In a little while they were surprised at hearing
riers starting out through the town and on all the country roads round about, ringing hand-bells and proclaiming: 'Oyez! Oyez! Hear ye! Hear ye! There will be a concert to-night at the big barn by the celebrated Distin family.' By 6 o’clock that evening the farmers and their families began flocking in. The barn was packed to its utmost capacity, the auditors wild with delight, the performers pleased with their reception and disposed to do their best, and when the house was counted the net profits were found to be $75.

After giving a number of concerts in Albany, Boston, and New-York, the Distins returned to Liverpool at the end of November, and early in the year following Henry Distin set himself up in London as a manufacturer of brass musical instruments. In a few months he had 20 workmen employed, a force which not long afterwards to $5. The growth of his business was phenomenal. At first he only made mouthpieces, and Levy relates that when a boy he learnt to form his lip for cornet playing by practicing on a mouthpiece which another boy in Dustin’s employ stole and gave to him.

In 1862, at the World’s Exposition in Paris, Henry Distin was awarded the prize medal over all his English competitors for the perfection of his instruments. In 1868 he sold out his manufacturing business for £9,700, and imagined that he could retire from business, settle down, and rest. That, however, was just what a man of his active temperament could not do. In a short time he lost $1,000 by an unsuccessful concert speculation on a gigantic scale at the great Agricultural Hall, London, and shortly after, by indorsement for a friend, lost $33,000, so that he found himself when past middle age muleted of the savings of his long years of hard work, almost as poor as he had been 30 years before, compelled to commence life over again, and handicapped with an agreement, entered into in the sale of his business, not to engage in manufacturing again within 100 miles of London. In this emergency an evil fate tempted him to try keeping a hotel in Antwerp, Belgium, and that finished his resources so completely that he had to borrow money from one of his own waiters to get back to London.

From that time on for a number of years Mr. Distin had a lively succession of varied experiences familiarly known as ‘ups and downs’ of fortune, at one time the salaried employee of a manufacturer, at another clearing £1,000 in a few months by a patented improvement on an American invention, now sick and penniless in a hospital, and again getting up successfully a grand military musical festival at the Alexandra Palace, at which 10 military bands were assigned to assist by personal favor of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. Finally, he came over to this country, having fully resolved to make his home here for the remainder of his days, and went to work here in New York manufacturing his famous light-valve cornets, which are universally conceded to be the best in the world.

“But is there enough demand for brass musical instruments in this country to make much of a business in their manufacture here?” Mr. Distin was asked by the writer.

“Why, do you know,” he replied, “there are no less than 15,000 bands in this country, brass bands, averaging 10 or 12 members each. Accept the lower number as a basis of calculation, and you have 150,000 performers. That is a great body to supply.”

“But can we compete in points of quality and cheapness here with the European makers?”

“Why not? The best brass in the world, that which first-class instrument makers use, all comes from this country. The perfection of mechanical appliances here is an offset to the greater cheapness of manual labour on the other side of the water. As for quality, the best evidence about that is that I am called upon to supply the finest class of instruments which is used by the first players in Europe. And the taste for brass band music is constantly growing in this country. Do you know that more music for brass bands is now published in this country than in France, Germany, and England together? Well, it is a fact, I assure you.”


**THE CAREER OF THE GREAT SAXHORN QUINTET.**

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But when William IV ascended the throne—although it is affirmed that upon his deathbed the old king said to him, 'Take care always of my old servants, especially of my band,' and he faithfully promised so to do—an order was issued for the immediate discharge of the band, which numbered 60 men. That was in 1830. So mean was the new regime that the members of the band were called upon to give up their uniforms, which were very gorgeous and costly. The coats
were heavy with solid gold lace in such quantities that they cost 75 guineas each. John Distin rebelled against that order and counseled his comrades to resist it. ‘We have been shamefully treated,’ said he, ‘for not only hath the King, in violation of his word, caused our sudden discharge, but he hath made no provision for us by pension or otherwise, and, to some of us at least, this is great hardship. Let us stand together and refuse to give up the coats. If they tear them from us we will appeal to the justice and sympathy of the people of England, which will be worth more to us than many golden coats.’ The Lord Chamberlain not only withdrew the demand for the coats, but, in lieu of a pension, caused the members of the band to be paid from £250 to £500 each, according to their years of service.

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In 1844, after seven years of highly successful concert giving throughout the United Kingdom, the Distin quintet went to Paris. As a little illustration of the difference between the prices musical artists commanded then on the Continent and what they get now, it is worthy of mention that the Distins were glad to get an engagement at a Paris theatre, for one month, seven performances per week, for 3000 francs, equivalent to about 25 dollars per week each. Henry Distin was by that time desirous of settling down in London as a manufacturer of brass musical instruments, and with a view to that end employed all his spare time in going about with an interpreter among all the makers of Paris, ‘seeing their instruments and learning all he could about their manufacture.

After the engagement at the theatre was over the quintet played one night at a grand concert given by a famous singer, upon which occasion they heard for the first time a new instrument called the ’s a x h o r n’ played by a French artist. ‘What is that?,’ demanded Henry, struck at once by the remarkable purity and sweetness of tone of the new instrument.

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Henry Distin made an arrangement for the loan of the three instruments, and when they were tried by his family at their hotel the combined tone awoke a sort of enthusiasm. Mr. Sax readily agreed to complete the necessary instruments, on the same principle, for the quintet, and as soon as sufficient practice in their use had been attained they were brought out in public. The first time they were so performed upon was in a grand concert at the Opera Comique, given by M. Berlioz, the famous composer. The quintet then played a selection from ‘Robert le Diable,’ upon saxhorns in such style that they were engaged to play at the Conservatoire, and by the committee of that institution were awarded a silver medal.

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They made arrangements for a concert tour of the United States, and had given one concert in Boston, for which they received $500, when all further proceedings were stopped by Henry Distin contracting a violent quinsy, which laid him up at the Astor House for three months and came near to taking his life. In April he had so far recovered that they could set out upon the projected concert tour, but the time lost had carried them on to spring; their route, which had been made up for winter, was toward the south, and day after day found them advancing to more and more tropical heat, quite beyond anything in their experience or anticipation, and in the face of a great, and to them novel, terror—the cholera.

They played in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg. But by that time they had reached where the cholera prevailed to such an alarming extent that people had no thought of public amusements; reports met them constantly that the dreadful epidemic was worse yet further southward, and they determined to give up their purpose of visiting New Orleans and return to New York.

Messrs. French and Heiser had just then fitted up Castle Garden as a grand concert hall, and engaged the Distins for a series of concerts there. Their first one, given to an audience of several thousand people, was an unqualified success. The public accepted them enthusiastically, and the press gave them the highest praise. One paper said: ' They do not play upon the old horns, but upon a lovely instrument invented by a M. Sax, and called after the inventor. The tone is exquisite, and, when the different qualities are combined, they produce the most delicious and ravishing harmony.' From that it would seem that the Distins were the first to introduce the Saxhorns to American knowledge, and such is, indeed, said to be the fact. The critic continued: ' The Distins are perfect masters of the instruments; the have sought and learned the very heart of their mystery, and they manage them with the most admirable tact. It is impossible to find fault with their performance, but we might fill a column in their praise. They exhibit in all they do the most refined taste; they throw into their playing deep feeling and beautiful expression, and they never fail in any passage whatsoever, as is the case with most brass instrument players. In short, they exhibit the greatest possible perfection in their art, and the instruments which are the vehicles of their expression are of a character to delight and fascinate all who listen to them'.

Canada was the next field in which the Distins tried their fortunes, and there, too, fate seemed against them at the outset, for immediately after they had scored one grand success in Montreal the concert hall was burned down before they could appear a second time, and there was no other place there in which they could give a concert. At Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, and other Canadian towns, however, they were very successful, and then they again turned their faces toward the United States in the early part of the month of September.
THE DISTIN FAMILY. CAREER OF THE GREAT SAXHORN QUINTET.
(Concluded from our last.)

The breaking down of a stage-coach in which they were journeying to the little village of Port Stanley, where they expected to take the steam-boat for Buffalo, landing them in that unpromising place at 10 o'clock at night, four hours after the boat had gone. The only inn in the place had no more beds than were required for the accommodation of the proprietor and his family, so that the travelers had to sleep as they best could upon chairs in the parlor. Under such circumstances, it is not strange that Henry Distin was up and out very early the next morning, almost with the dawn, but early as it was, he found a cheery blacksmith already at work shoeing a horse. The farrier said that he was an Englishman, from Worcester, and was very glad he had come to America, as he could make more money in a day in this country than in a month in England. When he learned that the person with whom he was talking was one of the famous Distin Family whom he had heard play in England, he insisted that they should abandon their intention of going to Buffalo that night, and give a concert in Port Stanley instead. Distin protested that the town did not look as if it had 40 inhabitants; that even if it had there was no time to print and publish announcements; that there was no place to give a concert in, etc. But the music-loving ferrier had an answer for everything. They could play in a big empty barn near at hand, which would be fitted up with benches during the day by the half-dozen men he had at work making wagons; he would answer for making the event known in good time without any-printing, and, finally, he would guarantee $50, enough, at least, to pay their expenses, if they would stop and play. The Distins consented to do so. In a little while they were surprised at hearing cries starting out through the town and on all the country roads round about, ringing hand-bells and proclaiming: 'Oyez! Oyez! Hear ye! Hear ye! There will be a concert to-night at the big barn by the celebrated Distin family.' By six o'clock that evening the farmers and their families began flocking in. The barn was packed to its utmost capacity, the auditors wild with delight, the performers pleased with their reception and disposed to do their best, and when the house was counted the net profits were found to be $75.

After giving a number of concerts in Albany, Boston, and New York, the Distins returned to Liverpool at the end of November, and early in the year following Henry Distin set himself up in London as a manufacturer of brass musical instruments. In a few months he had 20 workmen employed, a force, which not long afterwards was increased to 85. The growth of his business was phenomenal. At first he only made mouthpieces, and Levy relates that when a boy he learned to form his lip for cornet playing by practicing on a mouthpiece which another boy in Distin's employ stole and gave to him.

In 1867, at the World's Exposition in Paris, Henry Distin was awarded the prize medal for the excellence of his instruments. In 1868 he sold out his manufacturing business for £9,700, and imagined that he could retire from business, settle down, and rest. That, however, was just what a man of his active temperament could not do. In a short time he lost £10,000 by an unsuccessful concert speculation on a gigantic scale at the great Agricultural Hall, London, and shortly after, by endorsement for a friend, lost £30,000, so that he found himself, when past middle age, mulcted of the savings of his long years of hard work, almost as poor as he had been 30 years before, compelled to commence life over again, and handicapped with an agreement, entered into in the sale of his business, not to engage in manufacturing again within 100 miles of London.

In this emergency an evil fate tempted him to try keeping a hotel in Antwerp, Belgium, and that finished his resources so completely that he had to borrow money from one of his own waiters to get back to London.

From that time on for a number of years Mr. Distin had a lively succession of varied experiences familiarly known as 'ups and downs' of fortune, at one time the salaried employee of a manufacturer, at another clearing £1,500 in a few months by a patented improvement on an American invention, now sick and penniless in an hospital, and again getting up successfully a grand military musical festival at the Alexandra Palace, at which 10 military bands were assigned to assist by personal favor of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. Finally, he came to this country, having fully resolved to make this his home for the remainder of his days, and went to work here in New York manufacturing with great success his famous light valve cornets and other musical instruments.

1882    Henry Distin moved to Philadelphia and was employed with his son, William Henry Distin, by J. W. Pepper in building a new plant with modern equipment for them. From
1884-1886 Henry sold brass instruments. Sheet music was sold under the partnership of "Distin & Pincus."

1883 October. CORNET-BLOWER LEVY

Phillyadelphia. Penn., Oct., 27. Jules Levy, the cornet player, began a novel suit in Court No.2 today. Sixteen years ago he had the pleasure of using a silver cornet lent him by Henry Distin. He wrote Mr. Distin that the cornet was "the finest he had ever blown." Mr. Distin used the letter as an advertisement of his instrument. Mr. Levy claims that since 1867, when his letter to Distin was written, he has had the pleasure of using a silver cornet lent by another maker, who is said to appreciate complimentary letters more deeply than Mr. Distin. Levy tried ineffectually to induce Mr. Distin to stop using his letter, and he now brings an equity suit to restrain him from using it.914

1883 Henry Distin’s name was involved in violent controversies in 1883 between the principals in Philadelphia and CONN over the quality of imported versus locally made brass instruments bearing the Distin name: at this time the famous English cornet player Jules Levy, long an avowed Distin supporter, switched allegiance to CONN.

1884 From 1884 to 1888 Distin published music and sold instruments in Philadelphia. Distin’s ‘centre bore cornet’ (patented in 1884), whose design freed the flow of air from abrupt bends in the tubing, became the standard of excellence in the USA.915

1884-86 Henry became a Brass Instrument seller, also as Distin & Pincus in partnership as music publisher;

1886 Henry Distin became an American citizen in 1886, and in 1889 Henry and his son William Henry, also an instrument maker, relocated the Henry Distin Company to Williamsport where a new factory was built. The ‘Henry Distin Mfg. Co.’ factory in Williamsport PA, funded by local businessmen, with William Henry Distin as foreman, claimed to be the largest of its kind in the world.

1887  The British Bandsman magazine was founded.


1889  Letter from S. West- British Bandsman May 1889.

   “Some years later Mr. Henry Distin organized a ‘Flugel Horn Union’ (the precursor of his Ventil Horn Union) which performed at the Crystal Palace for the first time, on the occasion of old Mr Distin’s benefit concert, at which he played the trumpet in ‘Let the Bright Seraphim’ to Miss Rainsford, and that was his last appearance in public. On that occasion I was the leader of the Union.

   Sam West  

1890  Henry Distin retired to Philadelphia with a pension. The firm was called The Henry Distin Manufacturing Co., and was managed by Brua C. Keefer, Jr., son of the major stockholder.

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916  *The British Bandsman*, March 1889.
Appendix A

1892 A poster from 1892 shows The Henry Distin Mfg. Company’s New Factory, Williamsport, USA\(^\text{918}\) was built in 1889.

![Henry Distin at his factory in Williamsport](image)

Henry Distin at his factory in Williamsport

Henry Distin was described in the press as 'The last of the great Cornet Makers'.\(^\text{919}\) At the end of his life he was a famous industrial innovator.\(^\text{920}\)

1893 On April 12\(^\text{th}\) 1893 Theodore Distin Died aged 70\(^\text{921}\)

1896 Henry proposed a scheme to make his better-quality US models in a newly equipped London factory to be directed by his nephews or by ‘Distin Brothers', but this plan was never realised.

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\(^{918}\) See poster, January 1892.


\(^{920}\) Ibid..

\(^{921}\) *The Era*, April 1893.
Appendix A

1896 April 2nd Letter to Enderby Jackson from Henry Distin:

‘My father could not speak French and the Duke spoke the French language and very little English. He was at a loss to know what to do. Then my father was aware that one of the Black Men that used to be at the Head of the Band. One used to beat the cymbals and the other beat the triangle. They were dressed in oriental fashion with large turbans on and they made a great show at the head of the band and they were both Frenchmen and were born in the South of France and were both good scholars then my father got the bandmaster to tell one of the black men to go and interpret for my father. The Duke asked the black man what the name of the instrument was and he told him it was called the Kent Bugle – The Duke said he would like to have one made to send to Russia and after the marching past was over, the black man went with my father to a band instrument maker by the name of Halary and in two week(s) the bugle was finished and my father went with the black man to interpret the particulars to the Duke and gave the bill of the list which was five hundred francs (in English money £20). The Duke then told his attendant to pay the amount and ordered the attendant to give one thousand francs to my father which was £40. My father divided the money with the black man and the Grand Duke held out his hand and shook hands with my father and said goodbye in Russian and then he turned to the black man and said good bye – The attendant who was some noble man said to the Grand Duke, ‘What, would you shake hands with a black man?’ The Grand Duke turned round and in a very scolding voice said, ‘who made him black?’ and again shook hands with the black man.

Now my friend Enderby, I think you can make some notice of the above and say how the first bugle was sent to Russia.’


The fact that Henry Distin came to America with very little resources except his vast experience and expertise in brass instrument manufacturing and built a giant company making brass instruments considered to be the finest in the world is very significant.

In 1908 The Distin Company was the largest producer of brass instruments in the United States.922

1903 Death of Henry Distin

The death of Henry Distin Sunday at his home in Philadelphia removed a world famous cornettist well known in musical circles for more than seventy years.

He was born in England in 1819, and his father, bandmaster for the Marquis of Breadalbane, taught Henry and four other sons to play a set of five brass instruments. They performed before the royal families of Europe, and in 1848 opened a large establishment for the sale of musical instruments in London. They spent the following year in America and in 1879 Henry Distin came to New York.

He invented a cornet and established a factory in Pennsylvania, with which he was identified up to his death. He leaves two daughters, and a son, William Distin, also a cornettist.923

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922 The Metronome, 1908.