

The Illumbaton



The premiere of Giuseppe Dinklaker's *Etude Bruté* was a double-edged sword. Yes, it was a coup for the Bingtown Festival Orchestra to commission the work from such a famous composer—okay, *infamous* composer, but that's another story. However, the piece cost so much that orchestra management couldn't afford to pay the Bingtown Concert Hall's electric bill, already long past due. Knowing that the utility was unsympathetic to the orchestra's plight and that the premiere would likely take place in a darkened theater, second bassoonist Brad Pringler, who was a handy guy with a soldering iron, built the **illumbaton**. Emitting a light much brighter than an ordinary glow stick, the illumbaton worked superbly during rehearsal: even the cowbell player buried way back in the percussion session could see Maestro Meptang's smallest batonical nuance. Alas, at the premiere, a keyed-up conductor began the piece with an overly energetic downbeat. The illumbaton smashed against his music stand and shattered, spilling its flammable contents of chlorine trifluoride and titanium dichloride (which were *highly* flammable, really) onto the podium and into Rows A and B. A fire ensued, followed swiftly by pandemonium. Dinklaker liked the added excitement and vowed to add "conflagration" to the score as soon as he escaped the theater. Alas (to repeat that too oft used interjection), he is still in there, though fire officials expect to rescue him any day now.