

THE MUSIC STAND

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE BAND ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC.

March 2021



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
ONLINE FESTIVAL
OF BANDS

2-5 April 2021



From the President's Suitcase

Hi All,

I hope you have had a better start to 2021. I hope all bands are now back to rehearsals and almost 'normal' operations.

2020 has given us an opportunity to pause and to reflect on what we do and how we do it.

I am amazed at the resilience of our community bands and the tenacity and passion of our membership. This has shone in individual Bands over the years, but I don't believe, since the 2nd world war, that this has been tested on such a wide scope.

In 2021, despite the School system still rebuilding and Victoria in such a precarious position, 76 Bands are participating in the first ever Australian National Online Festival of Bands. This demonstrates not only the need for events to act as a motivation to drive us to rehearse and perform for our public audiences, but also the absolute need for us as musicians to come together to make great music.

The actions we took last year to support our Bands has resulted in a significant financial loss for the Association, a position which we are fortunate to be able to bear due to the hard work and diligence of Management Committees before us. This year we expect to make another loss or at best, to break even.

For 2021, we have increased the registration fees for Bands and members to 50% of the pre-Covid level. We recognise bands are still recovering and in need of support, and balance this with the need for the Association to be able to continue as a business.

Once the 2021 National event is completed, we are planning on taking a step back to investigate and plan changes needed to further secure and support our Bands and membership. We will look at the resources bands need to survive and grow, any aspects of the movement we can leave behind, and any new services we need to put in place.

Some exciting things are bound to happen this year.

The first ever Australian National Online Festival of Bands is being streamed over the Easter weekend and I am so pleased with the level of interest, support and participation. With 76 Bands currently performing across the weekend, including 5 Junior C Grade Brass Bands, something we have not seen for many years, it is promising to be an awesome weekend.

As expected, given the circumstances within Victoria and the School system, entries from these two sectors are well down, however, we do have 4 Victorian Bands participating and 2 school bands each with 2 bands participating. To those Bands, their conductors and members, I take my hat off to you for the herculean effort which you, in particular, have put in to get your bands together in such a short space of time.



Our adjudicators, Howard Taylor, Ron Prussing and Steven Stanke are looking forward to adjudicating this event and to share their knowledge and experience with you all. Our sponsors and supporters, Besson Buffet Crampon Group, APRA/AMCOS, Yamaha Australia and Creat-NSW are all excited to be a part of this great event.

ANOFOB has presented us with new challenges around Synchronisation permissions. This has added an extra layer of complexity in administering and organising this event. For the most part, the music publishers have been supportive, particularly Australian and New Zealand composers and smaller publishers, however, it is unfortunate to note that there are some publishers who have not and regardless of the present circumstances, have maintained a hard line with costs and restrictions.

We have been working with APRA/AMCOS and AMPAL for publishers to agree to an “event licence” or “Blanket Licence” but to date the publishers have shown an unfortunate unwillingness. We all want to be compliant with the letter of the law, however, this issue is unfortunately so complex and unclear and contains so many variables that compliance is almost impossible. We believe that for the ANOFOB we have found a way through, based on the advice from APRA/AMCOS, and are confident that the solutions we have in place will suffice.

This issue has, at times, threatened the viability of the event and has caused a great deal of frustration, and it is my belief that publishers who have been so inflexible and unsupportive, especially in these times, are taking the short sighted view and may be doing themselves a longer term disservice.

It is my genuine hope that we may see some progress on this and additional copyright permissions in the hopefully near future.

Please join me in thanking the publishers and composers who have worked with the community to arrange their permissions, and, a huge thank you to our Secretary Kristen Moodie, our Social Media Guru, Justin Screen, and, the members of the Management Committee who have worked so hard to make this first ever Australian National Online Festival of Bands a great success.

Be sure to tune in to www.brassbanned.com over the easter weekend to hear some amazing performances.

Our State Solo and Party Championships and the State Band Championships are both being planned as “in-venue” events for 2021. We are waiting on confirmation of Barker College for the Solos and the Band Championships are again planned to be held at The Joan. We are working with The Joan to ensure the event is CovidSafe so Bands and Audience members can attend safely whilst maintaining the usual great atmosphere which are our States. More news on this will come.

The Test Music for both remains the same as 2020 and has recently been re-released. Please check the BANSW website for the full list.

NEWS FLASH We have just had word that the restrictions and distancing guidelines for Bands and Instrumentalists have been relaxed. The full advice will be published to you all via Facebook and emailed as soon as we have this. Great news.

That’s enough from me until after the National Festival. I look forward to seeing you all online and, in venue later in the year.

Jeff Markham
President

Vale: Ron Hodson

Ron was born in Watford England in 1932 and migrated to Australia in 1939.

He settled in Sydney with his family, but it was not until he was 19 that he first learnt to play a brass instrument. He started with Liverpool Band in 1954 and then went into the Chullora Railway Band until they joined the Artillery Field Regiment in 1958. From there he transferred to the 1/15 RNSW Lancers in 1961. While he was with them, he attained "Bandsman of the Year" in 1967 followed by promotion to Corporal. He received the Service Medal followed by the efficiency Medal with bars. He played with them till 1987 when he retired from the Army Reserve.

Ron joined the Corrective Services band as a tenor horn player until 1992.

He also played for Parramatta City Band for more than 10 years on tenor horn. Ron joined Leichhardt Celebrity Brass band in 1993 as a tenor horn player where he was also Librarian for some time.



Over the years Ron also played in Tuggerah Lakes Band, at some jobs and when spending time at his unit in The Entrance. Ron played, for many years in the Giuseppe Verdi Band, at various festivals and services in the Italian communities around Sydney. Ron also played in Otto's Village Band, for years practicing at Ron's home, and in later years at Blacktown City Band room. Margaret was famous for her rock cakes and scones eagerly devoured by various players!

Ron kept going at Leichhardt as long as he could, then the Italian Band, and lastly attended at Blacktown City Band until a year or so ago, completing around 20 years of loyal service there. He had always hoped to sit in the band again, but was not strong enough. The band played a program at Ron's home for him and some of his family. Otto's Monday night group also practiced at Ron's home a few times & he played along on his cornet for a tune or two.

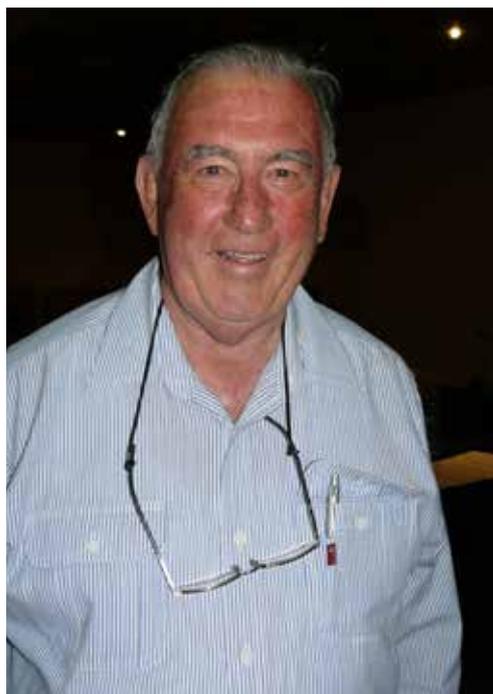
Ron and Margaret married in 1955 and they had one son and two daughters, one of whom, Beth, has played alongside Ron in the Corrective Services, Parramatta and then Leichhardt Bands until January 1999.

Ron's health had been failing markedly over his last 12 months. Ron celebrated his 88th birthday shortly before he passed away at St Joseph's Hospital in November 2020. Ron is survived by his wife Margaret and their one son, two daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Vale: Brother Mark Ryan

On the 20th February Brother Mark Ryan passed away and as a member of the Leichhardt Celebrity Brass Band for more than 20 years has left that group saddened by their loss.

Brother Mark was an outstanding band member. Interested in all aspects of the band's activities, he was supportive of all endeavours, welcomed other's achievements and in a variety of capacities lead and supported the band and its members. He was the first president of the Leichhardt band as well as a life member of the Holroyd Band



As a teacher he influenced a large number of students over the years in academic, musical and personal areas. He worked in schools at all levels as a teacher, Principal and example to students, many remembering him with affection and gratitude. Brother Mark retired from teaching at Holy Cross College, but continued living at the school and continued to assist in the school's activities.

With Leichhardt Band, Brother Mark was involved with all activities- he sang played bass and played saxophone on occasion. More importantly he was part of everything from organizing a tour of Ireland to organising a concert at the Town Hall. Personally, Brother Mark was an engaging person with a lively sense of humour. He always had a joke to tell- always without rancour. He was a deeply religious, good man who offered wise counsel on band matters and valued other members for their potential and achievements.

Leichhardt Brass Band is the richer for having Brother Mark's membership over the past years and the poorer for his passing. He lived to high standards and met them well.



Vale Brother Mark

George Ross

President

Leichhardt Celebrity Brass Band.



Do I need to take any special measures to keep my mouthpiece clean?



A message from Alliance Brass...

We have been contacted by some bands and school districts about keeping mouthpieces clean. The events of the last year have demonstrated how important it is to follow the basic rules of hygiene to keep safe from infectious diseases. Mouthpiece hygiene is essential, COVID or no COVID. Clean the mouthpiece with warm hot, soapy water and a mouthpiece brush. Use the mouthpiece brush to remove any build-up of dirt and debris in the throat and backbore, as this dirt can harbour harmful bacteria and fungal spores. Brush at least fifteen times for a minimum of twenty seconds to ensure thorough cleaning. A germicide spray, such as Sterisol, is fine, and good for use in schools, but a good clean with washing-up liquid, hot water and a mouthpiece brush is just as effective in killing germs. Not even Coronaviruses can survive a cleaning with soap and hot water, as their protective layer of lipids (fat) is destroyed by the action of the soap.

Allow the mouthpiece to air dry. This will keep the mouthpiece spotless and will prevent infections and cross contamination. Do not use a cloth to dry it, just in case there are germs already on the cloth. Never use any abrasive material, such as toothpaste (believe it or not, we have seen this recommended!), on a mouthpiece. It will scratch it and damage the plating. Use a Silver Cloth to remove any tarnish on silver plated mouthpieces.

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For your local stockist contact Grevillea Distribution at alliance@grevillea.com.au



Do not use solutions such as sterilising fluids designed for babies' bottles. We would never recommend this! These solutions are mostly based on Sodium Hypochlorite - i.e. bleach. Bleach will seriously damage the silver plating of a mouthpiece and should never be used. Sodium Hypochlorite is a strong oxidant and will cause the silver to tarnish very rapidly. In addition, it will generate Sodium Hydroxide which will etch into the silver and cause pitting, thus ruining the mouthpiece. Never use bleach on a mouthpiece!

Do follow some basic rules in the bandroom to avoid unwittingly passing on germs;

- don't share instruments
- do use bell covers to reduce the risk of spreading harmful aerosols
- do use a cloth or paper towels to soak up the water when emptying out an instrument. Dispose of the paper towels safely.
- Do regularly clean brass instruments with warm, soapy water and an instrument brush (a 'snake'). The brush **MUST** be used as it will dislodge any build-up of debris in the instrument. This will prevent any chance of re-infection or cross-contamination.
- Make sure music stands, door handles and so on are regular cleaned with alcohol wipes
- wash your hands before and after rehearsals

FROM THE LIBRARIAN



I have spent the past few weeks cataloguing a large quantity of donated music scores and other items. There are now another 500+ items in the catalogue that are available for borrowing.

One item that caught my eye was a slim volume, *Amateur Band Teacher's Guide and Bandsman's Adviser*, published by Wright & Round in 1889. This 60 page volume covers rudiments of music, advice on running rehearsals and anecdotes about the band scene in England at the time.

The pages devoted to advice on forming a community band were especially enlightening. How times have changed! To get a town band started, their advice was to advertise a meeting and pick the most suitable men (women are not mentioned in the book) from those who turn up. If only it were so easy today!

There is an interesting example of class distinction:

In Manchester, our amateur bands are composed of horny-handed working men exclusively. By working men, I mean factory-men, forge-men, colliers, carters, etc. We never expect to have a man as a member who 'gets his living with his coat on', and this class are, as a rule, (there are honourable exceptions), such 'superior persons' that we would rather have their room than their company.

They suggest that the band should be financed by subscription from members and the community. A certain amount should be put aside to help the musical director start a business in town so that he (NOT she) does not have to rely solely on payment from the band for sustenance.

The book recommends at least two rehearsals each week with four rehearsals preferable for contesting bands. (Good luck with that one today!)

At the time, there were around 40 000 bands in England. Today, there are around 4000, a considerable number but a fraction of the number in the Golden Age.

In sorting through the boxes of old music, it stuck me how much music goes out of fashion. I think that we now have seven sets of parts in the Library of selections from M. Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl*. It must have been very popular at the time but I cannot recall any of the songs from the show. (Our Band has two copies. We have never played it.) I wonder how good some of this old music is. Similarly, there are the Lionel Monckton musicals *The Arcadians* and *The Quaker Girl* which seem to be in every old band's collection. Are they worth hearing again? It raises the question of how much storage room should be allocated to preserving piles of music that will never be borrowed. Your local public library culls their collection regularly to ensure that obsolete material is removed. Maybe the BANSW serves a different purpose.

The catalogue may be accessed through the Band Association website. Ian Madden has done a lot recently to make browsing easier. Please contact me on jamesmoule@hotmail.com for any borrowing enquiries.

Introducing our ANOFOB Adjudicators

Steven Stanke



Steven Stanke began musical studies on trombone and later string bass at the University of Southern Queensland (then, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education) in 1980. He studied conducting with Peter Rorke, trombone with John Redfern and bass with Walter Noller. He later studied composition at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with Mary Mageau and Gerard Brophy, music theory and analysis with Shirley Trembath and Alan Lane and conducting with Alan Cumberland. Further studies included conducting with Mats Nilsson (Sydney Conservatorium of Music) and conducting with John Hopkins and PhD research with Elliot Gyger (University of Melbourne). He has conducted The Queensland Orchestra, Bucharest Sinfonia (Romania), United States Marine Band (on the steps of the Capitol, Washington, DC), ADF Bands and numerous community orchestras.

Steven has taught music at primary, secondary and tertiary levels both in Australia and the United States and has performed with numerous community orchestras and bands and, professionally, with the Royal Australian

Air Force Band and the Royal Australian Navy Band. He is active in community opera and orchestras, holding Artistic Director positions with Sydney Independent Opera, Symphony Central Coast and Lyric Opera Central Coast. Steven was also director and conductor of the University of Newcastle Conservatorium Orchestra and, from 2015 to 2019, Director of Music – Navy, which included managing all six Royal Australian Navy bands and supervising national and international music events.

Steven has written for many ensembles including military band performances at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (Melbourne), Nanchang International Military Tattoo (China), Invictus Games (Sydney), Waterford Massed Bands Festival and recordings by the Royal Australian Navy Band. His PhD research included the editing and performance of an unperformed three act opera by former Director of Melba Conservatorium, Fritz Hart and Steven has also transcribed many full-length operas for performance by small companies with limited resources. His orchestral transcriptions for wind band are published by Baton Music, Netherlands. His original composition, Rumbalara Rising, will be recorded by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra in June 2021.

Through more than three decades in musical training and performance, Steven has maintained a determined and passionate commitment to the arts and is particularly interested in developing sustainable strategies for orchestral and operatic performance and participation in changing and challenging artistic environments. His intent is to provide community and visiting artists with the courage and resources to design and present musical performances that are reflective of their abilities and potential.

HOWARD TAYLOR M.Mus.



Howard Taylor's musical career began as a cornet player in the Salvation Army in the South West of England. He conducted the Plymouth SA Youth Band at 17 until securing the Musical Directors job at the Plymouth British Legion at just 21 years of age.

In 1993 Howard was appointed Musical Director of Championship section Bodmin Band subsequently leading them to three successive South-West and Cornish Championships.

In 1997 Howard left the UK to become Musical Director of the TVNZ Auckland (Waitakere) Band in, New Zealand, leading the Auckland Band to NZ National Champions in 1999

After five successful years in Auckland, NZ, the Brisbane Excelsior Band (XLCR) appointed Howard as Musical Director in 2002. Since then, he has led XLCR to remarkable contest successes including 8 State Championships, 8 Australian A-Grade Championships and 3 New

Zealand Championships. Howard also led XLCR to the British Open and the All-England Masters, two prestigious events in the United Kingdom.

Howard has won 13 National A Grade Championship titles in Australia and New Zealand with three different bands and 12 State titles with four bands.

He was Musical Director of the National Band of New Zealand for three years, touring NZ with James Morrison in 2007 and Europe in 2009 until leaving for the UK in 2010 to work as a conductor with the world-famous Fairey Band. Howard returned to Brisbane Excelsior as Musical Director in 2013.

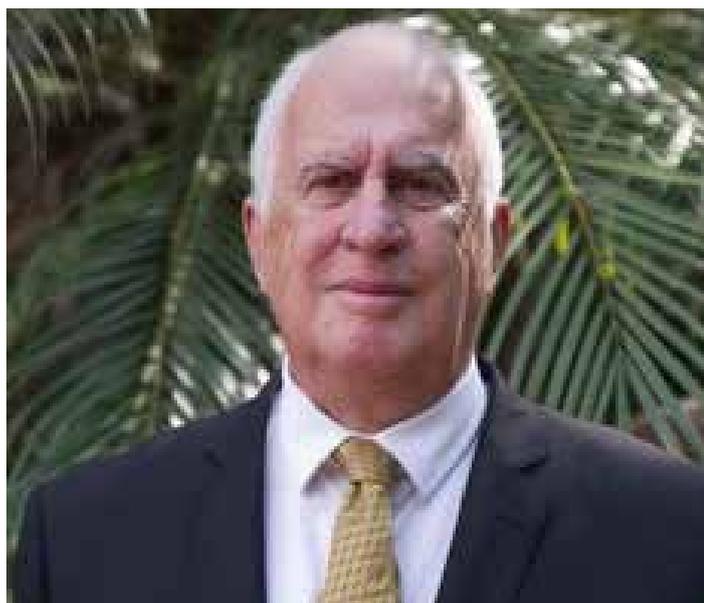
His ground-breaking work with bands includes regular trips to Tonga to work with school bands and conductors (starting the first National Youth Band of Tonga in 2016) and mentoring and adjudicating opportunities throughout Australasia. Howard has been employed as Musical Director with Brisbane Festival and Qld Music Festival, most recently working with the aboriginal community in Yarrabah, North Qld, accompanying singers Paul Kelly and Katie Noonan.

He holds a Master of Music from the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, and is now the Conservatorium Brass Band Director.

Howard runs his own company, Taylormade Music Australia, national distributors for a range of quality musical instruments.

RONALD PRUSSING

Dip. Mus Ed. A Mus. A



Ronald Prussing (Ron) is one of Australia's most distinguished brass players, teachers and conductors.

His professional trombone career started in 1970 when he was engaged as an extra by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra whilst still a student at the Sydney Conservatorium High School.

In 1978, he was appointed Principal Trombone of the then Elizabethan Trust Orchestra (now the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra), and then in 1980, he was appointed Associate Principal Trombone of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and then Principal Trombone of that orchestra in 1986, which position he still holds.

Over these years, Ron has held the positions of Trombone Tutor at the Canberra School of Music, Lecturer in Trombone at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and Adjunct Professor of Trombone at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music.

During all of this time, Ron has been heavily involved with brass bands. He started conducting bands at the age of 19 when he became the Musical Director of the Petersham Band of the Salvation Army. In 1983, he became the Musical Director of the Sydney Congress Hall Band of the Salvation Army, one of Australia's premier SA bands. Ron held this position for 17 years. During this time, Ron led the SCH band on numerous tours within Australia and three International tours to Canada and the USA, England and New Zealand.

In 2001, Ron was appointed the Musical Director of one of Australia's premier community bands - Waratah Brass. During his time as their MD, they won the NSW State A grade championship several times, placed 2nd three times in the National Band Championships, and won the prestigious Earn Keller entertainment concert 6 years in a row. They were rated the premier band of Australia by Four Bars Rest during this period. In 1986, Ron was appointed the Musical Director and Chief Conductor of the Sydney Youth Orchestras. He led them on a very successful tour of Spain that same year.

More recently, Ron has conducted Pacific Brass (a brass band of invited players) in numerous special concerts involving many outstanding guest soloists including Rodger Webster (past Principal Cornet of the Black Dyke Mills Band) and Philip Cobb (then Principal Trumpet of the London Symphony Orchestra).



Southern Highlands Concert Band

came out of hibernation in the last few weeks of 2020, much to the enjoyment of all players. It was not possible to play to an audience in December, but it was decided that a February 2021 concert would be planned if Covid would allow. This was done, so on Sunday 28 February we will welcome back our audience. To celebrate our and their return it will be a free concert, and as tickets are limited to 110 (thanks to Covid rules) tickets have already been “sold

out”. The concert has been titled “Lovely to See You Again” (the concert cancelled last May was “All You Need is Love”, so some items have carried over!)

Our rehearsal and performing home in Bowral has been the Bowral Memorial Hall. Council has decided to refurbish this venue, so it happens that the Feb 28 concert will be the last for the foreseeable future. “We'll Meet Again” has been added to the program, the don't know where and when finally being resolved after much searching. It is not easy to find a rehearsal space that can provide storage for the Band's timpani, chairs, stands etc, but at the time of writing our new home will be the Senior Citizen's Centre in Corbett Gardens in Bowral for rehearsals. Performance venue(s) not yet decided, but may include performances in Goulburn.

A few members left the band at the end of the year but a larger number joined. Our numbers are now approx 60. Anyone wishing to join or visiting is most welcome to come to a rehearsal at the above address at 7pm on a Wednesday evening during school terms.



Blacktown City Band

post covid.

Following lockdown, Blacktown city band commenced rehearsals at Lalor Park centre on 30th June with a small number of 12 players attending and adhering to our approved covid safety plan. As the weeks went on numbers improved and now we are averaging around 18 - 20 players.

Blacktown RSL asked the band to play for their remembrance ceremony on 11th November which was well attended by the local community. We also played at Lalor Park community centre market on 7th November. Like most bands our busy Christmas period has been curtailed with our playouts at Mount Druitt on hold pending approval from centre managers. Plus SES, National Servicemans Association, Naval association and Air league regular jobs cancelled due to covid. We were fortunate to gain approval to play 5 roaming carol playouts at Westpont Blacktown over the christmas period which proved very successful. We also played carols at Seven Hills shopping centre

We started back rehearsals in February and have played an outside concert at our community centre market day. We are hopeful to get back our regular ceremonies and community concerts. We regularly have about 20 players at rehearsals and Steve Freney, our musical director, is hoping a younger conductor can take up this position as the band grows in numbers and opportunities.



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Hosted by the  of the Band Association NSW



Castle Hill RSL

Youth Wind Orchestra

After what has seemed a very long year since our 2020 Music Camp, YWO are incredibly fortunate to have been able to go ahead with our annual Music Camp in consecutive Covid years!

With a healthy membership of 52 YWO members, 12 who were recruited during lockdown, and 7 supervising adults, we spent another wonderful weekend at the magnificent Crusaders at Galston Gorge.



Starting the weekend with a 2 ½ hour rehearsal meant our members were 'fired up' from the moment they arrived! After a good(ish) sleep on Friday Night, they moved into Sectionals for a 4 hour session with one of the 9 tutors who came along to work with our children. Their work certainly paid off as we listened to even better sounds in a further 2 hour afternoon rehearsal, which we recorded and played back in our listening session. Our members thrived on critiquing their own and their fellow band member performances with nothing but positive encouragement.

Saturday Night was so much fun with our annual Trivia Night, testing our sections with team work and trivia knowledge. The winners (due to a last minute team disqualification) were in fact our Saxophone/Tubas who showed us who really were the Champions!

Sunday saw an early morning move to the glorious Galston Community Centre where we recorded our pieces for the upcoming Australian National Online Festival of Bands. What a brilliant and exciting finale to our weekend full of music, friendship and fun!





St. George Brass Band



After four rehearsals in 2021, we can say that St. George Brass has survived, despite covid-19.

Our main fund-raising campaign of 2020, carolling in local shopping centres, was curtailed by a week, costing us around \$2700. That was after we had bought a set of timpani so our budget for this year is under threat.

We have averaged 35 players for rehearsals so far and we expect to register 38 members with BANSW.

During January when full band is in recess, we rehearsed duets and ensembles for the Metropolitan Solo and Ensemble Competition which will be held LIVE! in May.

Performances are still subject to covid rules but we are preparing for

- Greek National Day March sometime in March
- Symphony in the Park on Thursday 15th April featuring our juniors
- Anzac Day at Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL
- a free concert on Sunday 2nd May at Bexley School of Arts, featuring our ensembles
- a Central Tablelands tour in June or July.

Getting to know our members!

Spotlight on Gerry Power



A passion for music that spans the decades



Gerry was hooked and although there wasn't much money in the household, he pestered everyone for a couple of years until they all chipped in and he bought an old second hand clarinet in a paper bag. No case - just a paper bag.

"Thankfully, it came with a little instruction book and I probably drove everyone mad as I just plugged away and began to learn how to play."

The first piece he learnt, using piano sheet music, was 'Ramona' (written by Mable Wayne) and he played it again and again until his mother told him she never wanted to hear it again. With a smile Gerry tells me that when his mother turned 100 he turned up to her party with his saxophone and played Ramona, "I think she got the joke."

By age 18 Gerry felt he had gained some proficiency with the clarinet so he contacted a couple of young men, who played piano and drums at a little church dance every couple of week, in Melbourne, and asked if he could play music with them.

"They said they would give me a go so I took home all the piano players music they were playing and transposed it for the clarinet. That took me about a week of very late nights but after a few practises with the guys they decided I could play with them."

A member of the Southern Highlands Concert Band since 2000 and their President from shortly after, Gerald Power is not only a talented musician he is also a delightful gentleman, as befits someone of his generation. Having celebrated his 90th birthday last year this sprightly gentleman, together with his wife Joan, are living life to the full surrounded by friends, family and music.

Gerald Power, Gerry to his friends, was born in Melbourne on the 3rd of December 1930. He grew up in a little town, Timboon, about 200 kilometres south west of the city and attended the small Timboon school which had two rooms, grades 1-4 in one room and 5-8 in the next room. From an early age Gerry decided his life ambition was to study chemistry and to further that plan he managed to get a scholarship that paid for him to go to Melbourne when he 'ran out of school' at Timboon.

"I did a couple of years of 'Intermediate School' and then continued to attend what is now called RMIT University where I studied chemistry. It was a five year course but after three years my scholarship ran out and I couldn't afford to go to school, so I got a full time job and studied at night. It took me another four years to do the last two years at University."

Music began to play a part in Gerry's life while he was still living at home when his family got a 'wireless', which was set up with the aerial going up into a gum tree.

"The music on the wireless really got into my brain. It was just the beginning of the swing era and the great clarinet players like Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw and the big bands, like Glen Miller's Band were playing and I thought, boy this is just terrific."

After a few weeks the other band members offered Gerry a 'cut' of the money they were making for playing and then, a while later, when Gerry felt the band needed a little bit more 'noise' he bought himself a second hand old saxophone and started to make the transition from playing clarinet to saxophone. This proved to be a good move and over time the band got more and more work, playing at dances, weddings and parties. They were then joined by a tenor sax player, then a trumpet player and eventually the original group of three were a ten piece band playing, on occasion, at the Royal Ball room (Royal Exhibition building) in Melbourne. Around the same time Gerry joined a 'trad' Jazz group called Dick Dooley's Muddy River Jazz band where he played clarinet.

"It was a time of great fun and we all became really good





buddies ... good times. When you produce music together it's like playing in a footy team. You have this common thing that brings you all together ... it's very special."

In the 1950's the Victorian Government began Youth Concerts where under 25's could go along to concerts, performed by the Victorian Symphony Orchestra for free. Gerry was quick to take up this opportunity and credits that time for learning a lot about classical music.

"The conductor would take a Mozart symphony, break it down into bits and describe each bit and was how all the bits sequenced together. That time gave me a real love of classical music, something that has stayed with me over the years."



Up until this point the big bands and ballroom dancing had been the most popular thing in the music industry but this was about to change when Ballroom dancing went out of fashion, square dancing came in and Elvis arrived. Literally overnight Gerry and his band 'buddies' were no longer required. The instruments were put away in the cupboard and the band members got on with other parts of their life, which for Gerry meant meeting his future wife Joan.

Gerry and Joan married in 1963 and due to work commitments, the couple moved to Sydney, in the early 1970's. Keen to get back into some kind of music Gerry began teaching a few pupils the saxophone and also joined the North Shore Symphony and played with them for some years.

"It's a small world because although I didn't know it at the time there was a lady, April Butcher, playing with the North Shore Symphony when I was there who now

plays with the Southern Highlands Concert Band. Decades after we first played together, we are both playing together again!"

Joan and Gerry moved to Bowral in the Southern Highlands, again with work, and he began to look for local groups he could join to play music. His search led him to the Southern Highlands Concert Band in 2000, although his first request to join the band didn't go terribly well.

"I called the conductor, Julian Paviour, and asked if I could come along and play clarinet with the band and he said 'no'! So I then asked if I could come and play my saxophone and thankfully he said 'yes' and I've been with them ever since."

Talented at playing both the clarinet and the saxophone Gerry takes a moment to choose which is his favourite instrument but finally goes with the clarinet although sadly he can no longer play the former, due to his arthritic fingers.

"I can still manage the saxophone because you can be a little clumsier with your fingers. But even with the saxophone I have had to make a few 'patchwork' alterations, like adding a piece of cork to one of the keys which makes it easier to manoeuvre my fingers around the instrument."

Despite never having had a lesson in his life, Gerry has always practised hard and tried his best to play as well as he could, although he admits to being very self-critical of everything he plays.

"I love to play but I have never been happy with my playing. It's never been good enough and it's still not good enough to this day. After every concert I will always think back to parts that I could have played better. But I do enjoy playing in the band - it's terrific."

His love of playing in the SHCB is clear to see, as is the delight in Gerry's eyes when he talks about his grandchildren, many of whom, have inherited his love of playing music.

"We all get together at Christmas for 'family carols' and the children bring their instruments, and everyone joins in which is just lovely."

With Covid regulations making it impossible for bands to play in much of 2020 Gerry, like many others were relegated to playing at home, but with the easing of restrictions the weekly trip to the Bowral Memorial hall for Wednesday night practise with the Concert Band have returned.

"Playing the music is a huge part of the SHCB but so is the social interaction you enjoy with everyone. The band brings together people young and old and from all walks of life and it's so nice to be amongst a group of like-minded people. If you manage to play your bit of music well enough and it all comes together everyone goes home with a smile on their face feeling happy. There are usually lots of smiles at the end of the evening."

Age, it seems, is no barrier to this enthusiastic saxophone player as he continues to inspire the younger generation of concert band players with his love of all things music. Long may the patchwork fixes continue!

Article: Alison Duthie

Photos: Supplied by (Ron Craig) Southern Highlands Concert Band

City of Orange Brass Band

Les Riley

by Vanessa Cliffe - President, COBB



BANSW and COBB recently recognised Les Riley's 50 years long service with a badge, presentation by our local member Phil Donato and a mention in Parliament for the Hansard record.

Les started his banding career with the Blayney Brass Band around 1966. After the band folded around 1969, he joined the Orange Industrial Band (as it was called at the time) and has been a member ever since. Les plays the Eb Tuba.

Les performed with the band at many community events, including the Molong and Stuart Town ANZAC commemorations, the National Servicemen's Ceremonies, the Cherry Blossom procession down Summer Street in Orange, the Brass Celebration Festival held in Cook Park, and innumerable community fairs and shows.

Les Riley Presentation



He also competed with the Band at a number of competitions including the National Band Championships held in Canberra. Les recalls the Band having to resort to sleeping on a squash court as all the accommodation in Canberra was booked out.

He also recalls travelling to locations such as Sydney, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Wellington and Young for performances. Les boasts that he wore out three cars through his involvement with the Band and the extensive travel required.

Les selflessly volunteered many hours to the band as a player, coordinator, and mentor to young members. He served on the Band's Committee in various roles,

and also held the role of Band Sergeant for a time. He recalls one of his duties was checking the players in uniform to ensure their hair was not so long as to show under their hats.

The City of Orange Brass Band, along with the Band Association of NSW, would like to thank Les for his many years of dedication and commitment to brass banding and to our community, and recognise this commitment with a Long Service Award. Les' health is a little less than 100% these days and so he has not performed for us in a little while, however maintains a very keen interest in the Band's activities. We sincerely hope to see him playing his tuba with us again very soon.

Phil Donato - Group - December 2020



Phil Donato gave out 6 awards to band members for excellence.

*Megan Hodsdon
Fred Wilkins Award*

*Dean Channell
Conductor's Award*

*Chris Colla
Bandsperson of the Year
Award*

*Charlie Banham
Junior Conductor's Award*

*Naomi Wright &
Jayson Nalder
Junior Bandsperson of the
Year*

CITY OF WOLLONGONG BRASS BAND INC.

The City of Wollongong Brass, Wind and Junior Brass bands have been busily rehearsing for the 2021 Nationals Band Festival and all three are currently in the process of recording / videoing for this event - still with covid-19 distancing as required.

Our sincere thanks go to the School Principal of Woonona High School for making this all possible and kindly allowing all of our bands to have continuous use of their hall over the past 9 months.

Secretary Jenny Wilkie and husband Alan have been wonderful in maintaining and making sure that all covid-19 restrictions are in place and adhered to, a big thank you must go to both Jenny & Alan for the difficult task and hard work they do each and every week to ensure that we are all kept safe.

We do hope to be able to hold a seniors concert on 17th April where all bands will be take part. - all going well with covid of course.

City of Wollongong Brass and Wind Overview from President.

A couple of weeks ago I was killing time due to the weather and waiting for an "open house" next door when I sent an e-mail to our Committee regarding our bands. That e-mail triggered a number of events which are best detailed in the following overview of our Organisation.

The City of Wollongong Brass Band Inc. is the main band of our organisation which has a number of sub bands and trades under various names:

- City of Wollongong Brass & Wind
- City of Wollongong Wind Band
- Illawarra Brass
- Wollongong City Band (web site to accommodate internet searches)

Our Committee manages the Organisation and the Musical Directors run their bands with support from our Committee. We are a volunteer Organisation which relies on the goodwill of our Musical Directors and Committee to make things happen. We, and the Musical Directors in particular, are always looking for logistical help, If you, or someone you know, are able to help, I would be

grateful if you could speak to one of our Musical Directors or a Committee person.

We are financially sound but we do not have a huge income or reserves. Currently we rely on grants to fund any large cost items such as the xylophone that was purchased late last year using a Government stimulus grant for loss of income as a rest of COVID-19. We have a 3rd timpani on order and would be grateful for any assistance with fund raising to purchase a 4th timpani, a defibrillator, a concert bass drum, a portable PA system and update our uniforms.

I would like to thank our Committee for keeping us going during COVID-19 and acknowledge Woonona High School's contribution to our Organisation and contest successes by allowing us to rehearse in their auditorium.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Alan Wilkie for his support and contribution to our Organisation with his donated time developing and maintaining our web page and recording together with Jenny, editing our contest pieces. Also thanks to Jenny Wilkie for her work in respect of synchronisation rights to enable our contest recordings to be published.

The City of Wollongong Brass & Wind Organisation started out as a single brass band. Over the last couple of years there has been significant growth in the number of sub-bands in our Organisation, particularly with the Learners and junior bands. Our growth has outpaced membership growth and a lot of our members cross-over between our various bands. We would thinly stretched if we were to allocated people to only one band.

Currently, our bands are as follows:

1. Senior Brass – a contesting band. Rehearses between 7:20 & 9:30 pm on Friday nights with a future Tuesday night option for rehearsals. Musical Director is Kevin Skues.

2. Illawarra Brass – new “youth” band and hopefully will continue as a permanent band. This band was recently created to capture youth players leaving our Junior Brass who were not progressing to the Senior Brass. When formed, this band had sixteen past members and eleven experienced players new to brass banding. This Band currently rehearsing on Sunday afternoons. Musical Director is Des Cannings

3. Junior Brass – for junior players and feeds into the Senior Brass. Rehearses before Senior Brass from 5:30 to 7:00 pm on Friday nights. A contesting band. Musical Director is Des Cannings

4. Learners Brass – to feed into the Junior Brass. Rehearsals between 5 & 5:30 pm on Friday evenings. Musical Director is Des Cannings

5. Daytime Brass – a social band which to accommodate non-contesting members and members of the community dropping in for a “blow”. This Band rehearses between 10 & 12 am on Tuesdays. Musical Director is Fay Craig.

6. Senior Wind – a contesting band. Rehearses between 7 & 9 pm on Wednesday nights. Musical Director is Leanne Walton.

7. Junior Wind – Committee approval to re-form with Kevin Skues as acting Musical

Director. Potential for contesting. When re-started, rehearsals will be from 5 to 6:30 pm before Senior Wind on Wednesday nights.

8. Learners Wind – an existing band under our Constitution and needs to be considered for a re-start and will feed into the Junior Wind Band. Rehearsals prior to Junior Wind on Wednesday evenings.

9. Adult Learners – A group for adult learners which rehearsals on Friday evenings. Graduates to be fed into other existing bands. Kevin Skues is convenor. Times are 5:30 to 6:00 pm for arrival, question time and warm-up. Rehearses between 6 & 7 pm.

10. Drum Band – was approved a long time ago. Alex Flis did start a group a couple of years ago. Convenor is Jessy Wiggins, assisted by John Dent and Bruce Janzen. Thanks to John Dent for donating a drum kit to assist us with this and more on this when this group is to re-start.

11. Ensembles – we support any group of members wishing to form an ensemble. Please consult and Executive Committee Member or Musical Director for assistance.

In addition to the above bands and under the provision of By-Law No.6, our Organisation hosts the following musical groups:

- EROS Big Band on Monday nights and Friday mornings.
- Wollongong Trombone Choir – rehearses on the third Sunday afternoon of each month. Bob Wallbaum is the current convenor. Participants are from Illawarra, Goulburn & Southern Highlands, Nowra and Camden regions.
- Cossie & The Disappointments – a Honk (Street/Folk/Big Band Music) band whose participants are a mixture of current and past members of both EROS Big Band and the Brass Band. Rehearses on a needs basis on Thursday mornings.

Bill Short
President
25/02/2021

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FRI, 2 APR-5 APR

Australian National Online Festival
of Bands – Online event



SAT, 15 MAY-16 MAY

Sydney Metropolitan Solo and
Ensemble Competition

SAT, 18 SEP AT 19:00

The Brilliance Of Brass
Capitol Theatre Tamworth



Est. 1895