

August 12, 2003

### **Musical Director's Report**

Congratulations to all who attended the Bible Society's Hymnfest. You sounded very fine indeed, and I received a great number of favourable comments. Over 300 singers, a powerful pipe organ and a 30 piece brass band made a sound not heard in St Matthew's before.

The hymns we accompanied stayed in time despite the large number of people involved, and our solo items were very well played. The fanfare ending from the choir loft was quite spectacular. The organiser is keen to hold similar events annually, largely due to the enjoyment the congregation felt when singing with the band – well done!

On September 21 we will return to St Matthew's for their annual feast day celebrations. The choir and other musicians associated with the church will present their own items, the congregation will sing a few hymns, and we will be the special guests. I would like to include our new arrangement of *Repton* and all of *Dambusters* if possible.

The contest program is going well. I am very pleased with the progress you have made in the last few weeks. The hymn sounded very confident at St Matthew's and should give us a solid start at Ballarat. The tricky sections of the test piece are starting to work now, and most players have the tempo changes under control. A little more variations in dynamics are still needed – some forte sections need more tone, and *pp* really must be very, very soft.

*Breezin' down Broadway* went remarkably well at last week's rehearsal. Despite some wayward tempo fluctuations there was a real sense of direction and confidence in your playing. I hope this will be one of the highlights of the entire C grade section this year.

*Le Tricot Rouge* still has some work to do, mainly in getting a much lighter feel in the sections that are not marked *ff*. There needs to be a much bigger contrast between sections. Most of the notes are correct however, all it needs is a little more musicianship. I have been listening to Cory's A grade performance of this march and I think our interpretation really is getting near the mark.

I hope everyone enjoys our dress rehearsal concert this week. Thank you to those who have sold tickets, I am sure the audience will like what we have to offer. Please ensure, as always, that you warm up fully before we start. Gentle lip flexibility exercises and lots of warm air are highly recommended.

Next week I will hand out new music to try. Some of it is not scheduled for performance until 2004, but we will add several of the pieces to our repertoire immediately, including:

*Jurassic Park*

*Light Walk*

*The Padstow Lifeboat* (if you can play your chromatic scales!)

*Swingtime Religion*

The new hymn books have arrived. I hope to organise annual hymnfests at St John's Wodonga, Zion Walla Walla, and Wangaratta Cathedral. Hymns are something brass bands can do very well, either as a small group or with a full band. I believe this area of our playing can become a very rewarding part of our musical life, both musically and financially.

Best Regards

Gregory Lewis