

August 18, 2004

Musical Director's Report

Congratulations on a great weekend in Ballarat. Despite illness that forced the withdrawal of two players we were able to present an excellent recital with over 30 players. The mood of the band was very positive during the Saturday rehearsal. Thanks to all those members who put in the extra hours at home to make the weekend such a success.

The band has made significant progress in the past few years. We have moved from the bottom of D grade to second place in C grade. Every one should feel proud of their efforts. I was pleased with all the pieces and there was no doubt that we were better prepared than some other bands.

Barrie Gott spoke to me backstage after the contest and commented on the calm mood we created in the opening of the hymn, and the obvious sense of enjoyment that we projected in the march.

To paraphrase what I said on stage, I go to the Victorian Championships to:

- Listen to the A grade bands so I know how we should sound.
- Spend a weekend with like-minded people enjoying the social aspect.
- Use the preparation for the contest to improve our sound.

Note that I did not say we came to Ballarat "to win". Despite the ultra competitive nature of our society where everyone strives to be "winner", this is not the reason I go to Ballarat.

Winning is not nearly as important to me as improving. We played better this year than in 2003, and I will do my best to help you continue to develop. We will win as a consequence of improving our breathing, rhythm, articulation and tone. Ultimately, people come to bands because they enjoy playing together, and the better we play the greater will be our enjoyment. Winning, if and when it happens, will be a bonus.

When a CD of our performance is available it will be copied for all members. If there is enough interest I would be happy to put aside some rehearsal time to listen to our playing together. The adjudicator's version is already available. I do not intend playing this, but copies can be made for interested players. It records the band from the microphone near the adjudicator and is extremely poor quality. I also find that the comments just obliterate the band and get in the way of enjoying the music.

Ballarat is important to our development as a band, but it is not the major event on our calendar. That of course is the Carols concert. Lindsay has done a tremendous amount of work in securing major sponsors for 2004. With a large budget and guaranteed promotion we may well be staging the biggest event of the band's history at Willow Park on December 19. The beginners will be asked to join the main band in term 4 so they can be part of the Christmas Concert.

Between now and then we have a several important engagements, a Trip to Tasmania and more twilight concerts during November. If all members of the band can work as hard in preparing these performances as they did for the Ballarat weekend then we will be able to lift our public profile considerably, and enjoy playing some excellent music together.

Best regards

Gregory Lewis