

February 10, 2004

Musical Director's Report

Welcome back to another year with Wodonga Brass. We have had a busy start with a successful march and concert in Corowa followed by the Australia Day ceremony at Willow Park. Thank you to all members who attended.

We have begun some serious work on new performance items for 2004, including:

Padstow Lifeboat
Keighly Moor
Army of the Nile
Whirlwind
Fanfare of Praise
Summon the Dragon

Some of these are quite challenging and will need some careful home study. Remember also that I am available from 11:15 am on Sundays for extra help.

In this newsletter I want to return to the topic of bugle calls as an excellent method of developing your rhythmic skills, high range, stamina and tone. Every year it is a pleasure to hear our Principal Cornet, Ross Draper, play at the ANZAC Day ceremonies. All players should work to improve their mastery of this important facet of brass playing.

On the back of this page I have written some examples to try. They are printed in order of difficulty, with options for those who cannot reach a top A easily. The important points in all of these pieces are:

1. The constant use of 1st and 2nd valves to make life a little easier. You could of course try them in a higher key when you feel confident. Solo chair players should be able to play all of these without valves. That is, three notes higher than written.
2. A mixture of rhythm patterns including quavers, semiquavers and triplets. This is vital. Use your metronome and learn how to switch from one pattern to another.
3. A combination of sequential harmonics and large intervals. This will help you avoid the dreaded "severe mispitching". The ability to jump 2 octaves with confidence is the mark of a fine player – this should be one of your main goals in life!

My little compositions however are designed to be just the start. When you can play them all try writing a few calls of your own. You may even discover you have a flair for composing!

National Championships

Cheryl, Toby and I will be at the 2004 contest in Launceston this year. We are looking forward to seeing the A grade bands in action. This year the composer of the test piece, Martin Ellerby, will be giving a talk about the music before the event. This will be a good chance for us to get some first hand information about how modern brass composers approach their work.

Toby has entered the Junior flugel section, although at the moment no music is available. It may be "quick study" time for all when it arrives.

Best Regards

Gregory Lewis