

July 13, 2004

Musical Director's Report

With one month to go until this year's Ballarat performance I am quite pleased with the progress we have made. The hymn is beginning to take on those qualities of great power, sustained emotion and absolute calm that the music demands. The band is starting to listen to one another and develop a more integrated sound.

The test piece is a challenge, as it should be. If it was easy, anyone could do it! Lead players are doing tremendously well in coping with the solo and small group work, and the full band has a sustained power now that it did not have 12 months ago. A great deal more work is required in the 2nd and 3rd desks across the band to build this even further. Playing the notes quietly to yourselves won't do at all I'm afraid.

The concert item gets better every week. Although we have played this many times before, it has only recently begun to work as a cohesive concert item. The continuous journey from a single quiet flugel to a large band in full flight is an exciting experience for the audience, and ourselves, if we do it right. I have high hopes for this music.

The march has finally reached a stage where it has a self-propelled momentum that is invigorating. Standing before the band during this march is one of the most enjoyable experiences of my working week. Now, if only the 2nd and 3rd desks would play with a little more courage we would have a top class item in our repertoire.

This Sunday, July 18, is vital to our preparations. We will work from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm with a break for lunch. Please work intelligently to master the difficulties of your individual parts at home before this rehearsal. Ideally, you should come to the band room with the confidence to perform your own part as a solo item. Play musically, with all the articulations and volume changes working automatically. Listen to your sound. Does every note you play have the same tone and power of your section leader? If not, what can you do to improve it? (Here's a hint: BREATHE!)

By the end of this Sunday's rehearsal I would like the band to be in a position to play all four pieces in concert. Please do your best to help us achieve this goal.

Michael and Athelea O'Sullivan have put a great deal of energy and time into organising our Tasmanian trip. For the first time in many years we have a solid play list of over 90 minutes of wonderful music available to us. With your support we could combine a great holiday with some very rewarding music making.

Costs will be kept to an absolute minimum to allow as many players as possible to attend. It is trips like this that build stronger friendships among players, forge new links with interstate bands, and provide real musical challenges that will be extremely valuable to our future. Please consider travelling with us at the end of September for this unique opportunity.

Best regards

Gregory Lewis