

May 10, 2005

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

Over the past few weeks Wodonga Brass has significantly lifted it's standard. Thank you to all members who put in the time and effort to make our appearances so successful.

A weekend playing with an A grade band was a wonderful opportunity for all players to hear, and feel, how great performances are prepared. Some of the most obvious characteristics of front line bands such as Darebin are:

- ♫ Tubas supporting the music at all times, a bottom-up approach to balancing the band.
- ♫ Spectacular dynamic contrasts - a full band at *ppp* is a beautiful and unique sound.
- ♫ Secure lower parts in all sections – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> parts are vital to a great performance.
- ♫ Constant adjustment of intonation to smooth out chords – G# is not the same as Ab.
- ♫ Rhythmic precision – everyone plays with a strong sense of internal pulse.

While it is true that A grade competition music often involves lightning fast fingers and advanced double and triple tongue passages, the main difference between A and D grade is the sound. Top players produce a clear confident tone, in tune, in the right place, and with an awareness of how their part slots into the sonic landscape of the music.

Simply playing notes is not enough. More important is listening to the band as you play and being an integral part of it. Be proud of your parts, prepare them as though they are contest solos, and always listen to those around you, especially the tubas.

I was very impressed with the way that Wodonga Brass members acquitted themselves. We have progressed far beyond the D grade band of only a few years ago and are now heading confidently towards B grade. Several of our players matched Darebin note for note over the entire weekend. I trust that the realisation that the gap between our two bands is less than either group anticipated will continue to fuel a growing sense of self-confidence in all our performances.

The concerts in Bright and Albury both featured the major work *A Saddleworth Overture*. This exciting and popular piece has quickly become a standard part of our repertoire. I am sure it will feature for many years to come where an Australian theme is required. Many of our other standard pieces were lifted to new heights through our association with Darebin.

The band worked overtime on ANZAC day with members scattered across the north east region, performing in small groups in Rutherglen, Tangambalanga and Yackandandah before combining for the Wodonga march and official ceremonies. Our involvement in this most important national day was made with great public spirit, enthusiasm and skill. Well done!

The annual Bright Festival gives us a chance to play to a large audience. The band sounded alert, self-assured, energetic and well prepared. Our recital was very well received and many people spoke to me afterwards, amazed that a local band could present such a challenging program with such confidence and polish.

I am enormously pleased with the progress of this band. Musically we are making great strides, and socially we are working strongly together, supporting each other and the wider community to provide public music of which we can all feel very proud indeed.

Gregory Lewis