

State Championship Result

Once again the band has proven itself as the premier brass band in WA by taking out the title in the State Band Championships held at Perth Modern School on 1 June. The band performed the hymn setting 'A Childhood Hymn' arranged by conductor Alan Lourens, the 'Set Test' piece 'Seascapes' by Ray Steadman-Allen, the march 'Mephistopheles & 'Own Choice' piece 'Blitz' by Derek



Bourgeois. Bruce Raymond, conductor of South Australian champions (& last years National Champions) Kensington & Norwood Band was adjudicator for the weekend. A number of individuals took part in the Solo & Ensemble competitions with the Midland Brick quintet winning the ensemble section. Three of the four soloists to make the champion of champions play-off were from Midland Brick with Flugel player Paul de Cinque taking the State title from horn player Sarah Ross & fourth place Alex Meredith. In a surprise but well deserved verdict, the Norm Snow Trophy winner (for Best Brass Instrumentalist in all grades of the competition) this year went to our own Glenn Evans playing solo cornet – as a permit player- for Belmont Brass. Well done Glenn and congratulations from us all at MBB.

Former member celebrates his 90th

Former band member Jimmy James, MBE, turned 90 on the 26th March 2003. Jimmy enlisted underage in 1929 as a Band Boy in the 1st Battalion, Welsh Regiment. He served in India from 1934 to 1943 as a musician and as a Sergeant training troops for the war. During the middle 1940's Jimmy completed Bandmaster training at Kneller Hall and left the British Army in 1948 to migrate to Australia. On arrival he took up the position of Founding Bandmaster of the Western Command Band, now the Australian Army Band Perth. With no instruments or musicians he built the Band from literally nothing. Mr James was honoured with an MBE in 1960 for his contribution to music.

After leaving the Army in the mid 1960's Mr James played the Tuba and French Horn with the WA Symphony Orchestra and taught music at WA's premier music school, Perth Modern School. He later moved to Albany in the South of WA and played Tuba with the Albany Band until the age of 85. In 1998 the Army Bandroom complex at Karrakatta was rededicated as a con-joint facility hosting Navy Band Western Region and Australian Army Band Perth and named the Jimmy James Band Centre in honour of his achievements. Career highlights include being a participating Bandmaster, in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, 1962 Commonwealth Games Perth and as a fanfare trumpeter at Queen Elizabeth II's wedding. Jimmy is a very much-respected musician in WA, congratulated by all for this milestone.

Forthcoming Events

1 June	-	State Championships – Perth Modern School - 1pm
29 th June	-	Old Austria Club – Viennese Brass Afternoon 1430 - 1700
July/ August	-	Recording Sessions – Christmas/ German/ Viennese/ choral
7th September	-	Boral Cup soccer Semi Final - tba
14th September	-	Boral Cup soccer Grand Final - tba
21 st September	-	WABA Funtest Mandurah - tba
5 th October	-	Old Austria Club – Oktoberfest 1330 - 1700

Instrument Profiles

Having completed the profiles of the band members we thought we would feature some information about the instrumentation of the band. Starting with the smallest instrument.

The Cornet



The cornet was developed in the late 1820's by French instrument maker Etienne-François Périnet who fitted valves to a posthorn. The function of the valves is to control the pitch of the instrument by varying the length of tube the air flows through. The first valve lowers the pitch by one whole tone, the second by half a tone & the third by a tone & a half. It was introduced firstly into Parisian orchestras around 1830 & featured a series of crooks & valves which enabled it to play in

every key from low D up to C. Producing a more mellow sound than the Trumpet it also proved to be more versatile than other brass instruments of the time. It's reputation spread quickly across Europe & to America where, by the late 19th Century many parts originally scored for trumpet were being played by cornets. The early cornet players were horn players who were able to play technically difficult & very impressive pieces thus the popularity of the instrument grew & it became used extensively in light music concerts & balls.

A number of variations on the instrument appeared, a circular cornet & a cornet that the bell could be moved in different directions, the echo cornet, which had an additional valve & extra tubing, such that the player could make the instrument sound as though it was answering as an echo of a passage previously played (see picture below). Also the piccolo cornet which was pitched to play an octave higher than the regular cornet. The cornet remains popular in Military & Brass bands, Jazz & dance bands.

Today's cornets are pitched in B flat. We also have (in Brass Bands) the Soprano cornet which is pitched in E flat. This instrument is pitched a perfect fourth higher than the B-flat cornet. It is brighter in sound than the "regular" cornet, and can be easily heard above the full band *tutti*. The Soprano cornet is considered a difficult instrument to play, in part because of the exposed nature of the parts. There is almost always only one soprano cornet in a band, and soprano players are considered specialists. Although it possesses the same agile qualities as the B-flat cornet, and is generally played by a skilled person.

In a brass band, the cornet supplies the principal soprano voice. This instrument occupies a position in the band similar to that of the violin in a symphony orchestra. In small groups, the cornet is almost always the principal melody instrument. However, even in small groups (such as a sextet), there are usually at least two cornet parts, with the second part supplying the alto voice. In more complex arrangements, the cornet section is sometimes split into three or four parts. The parts are often subdivided as *divisi* into two, three or more voices. Because the cornet is the highest-pitched instrument in the brass band, and because its tone is relatively bright, it is capable of "cutting through" and being heard even when the entire band is playing. The agility and speed which can be achieved by a skilled cornet player also make it a favoured instrument for solo items, both with and without full band accompaniment.

Brass arrangers sometimes modify the sound quality of the cornet by specifying various kinds of mutes. The straight mute and cup mute are the most common. More subtle changes in timbre can be achieved by writing in high or low registers, varying the key, instructing the player to play with the bell close to the stand or partly closed by the hand, use of dynamics, or the presence or absence of *vibrato*.

Information sources include:

'The Cornet Site' &

'The Classical Collection Magazine, Orbis Publishing Co, London'



To receive information about the band call the Secretary, Tony Turner on 93881263 or e-mail on secretary@wabass.com or visit the band website on www.wabass.com