



NEW ZEALAND

Mouthpiece

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NATIONAL YOUTH BRASS BAND

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2025 National Contest

Festival of Brass Organising Committee: Major Graham Hickman, Stephen Leader and Denis Spurdle. Assisted by Todd Turner, Cameron Burnett, Rebecca Reside, Emily Sullivan and members of the NZ Army Band Association.

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2025 National Youth Brass Band

Tyme Marsters (Musical Director) and Emily Richards (Band Manager). Section Tutors: Aishah Leitner, Anthony Smith, Cameron James, Kyle Lawson, Matt Toomata, Mike Ford and Roanna Funcke. Thanks also to Bethany Mitchell, harp player from the Christchurch Youth Orchestra.

Grants and Donations: Friends of the National Youth Brass Band, Pub Charity, Creative Communities Scheme from Ashburton District Council, Kiwi Gaming Foundation, Four Winds Foundation and Youthtown Trust.

Logistical support: New Zealand Army Band, Addington Brass, Ashburton Silver Band, Timaru Brass, Woolston Brass, Michelle Starns (programme and poster design), Cameron Burnett (social media and photography), Aardman Animations Ltd, James Parkinson and Jam Packed Productions.

2025 National Secondary Schools' Brass Bands

Linda Filimoehala (Musical Director), Nic Scott (Development Band Musical Director), Malcolm Barr (Course Manager), Hayden Cullen (Assistant Manager) and guest soloist Luke Giri-Spence. Section tutors: Nicholas Garrett, Liam Wright, Ray Farrow, Leo Read, Jordan Seaton, Jeremy Richardson, Riwai Hina and Grant Myhill.

Grants and Donations: Pelorus Trust, Lion Foundation, Ministry of Education, Pub Charity, BBANZ Charitable Trust and "Seat Sponsors".

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'Tis the Season

I say this every year, but it's hard to believe that Christmas is almost upon us once again. A hectic time as work, school, and banding hype up before winding down for the summer. Most bands will be preparing for Christmas concerts, parades, and carolling. For many, carolling is not just a festive tradition but an excellent opportunity to be visible in the community and a primary fundraising project for the year. Your unique service brings the joy of music to our local communities, and we are proud of your contribution.

2025 has also been a busy and successful year for your Association. The year began with our highly talented National Youth Band providing the soundtrack to the Wallace & Gromit movie "The Wrong Trousers" to a capacity audience in Christchurch. In July, the impressive sounds of our country's best brass bands, and five bands from Australia, returned to the wonderful Christchurch Town Hall for the National Contest. In October, 70 young musicians rehearsed and performed in Wellington at the National Secondary Schools' Band training course. And last month, members gathered in Wellington



for our Annual Conference and 93rd Annual General Meeting.

The AGM and conference workshops are critical events in the banding calendar, and although "meetings" are not how everyone would like to spend their weekends, the robust and respectful debates in the meeting room and over lunch or drinks are vital in shaping our organisation's future. We shouldn't be afraid of differing opinions; instead, we should encourage all members to participate so we have a broad range of life experiences to draw on in our decision-making. This may become even easier as we adapt to the "new" technology of having our conference and AGM accessible online.

We must embrace the opportunity for change because change enables growth and keeps us relevant. We only made it to where we are today because over the past 145 years we took the odd risk and made constructive changes. Our National Contest and representative bands are all a result of continual evolution. As with life, not everything we try will succeed, but you won't know unless you try.

I want to express my gratitude to every player, tutor, conductor, administrator, supporter and volunteer for the work you do, which enables your band and, in turn, our organisation to prosper. We all have considerable demands on our

time, so I am deeply grateful that you generously gave some of this precious commodity to brass banding. I'd also like to sincerely thank the businesses and groups that have generously supported BBANZ's activities through grant funding, sponsorship and logistics. To the National Management Committee, thank you all for your unwavering commitment to the betterment of brass banding in New Zealand. Finally, thank you, Helen Lee, for all the support and assistance you give me and all bands throughout the country.

2026 will start all too soon for many as we prepare for an April contest and the start of the National Band programme. But first, if you find yourself in Auckland during your summer holidays, why not plan your travels to hear our best young musicians, the 2026 National Youth Band, in concert? I assure you it will be worth the effort.

From my family to yours, I wish you a safe and very merry Christmas, and I look forward to catching up with you all again in 2026.

Yours in banding.

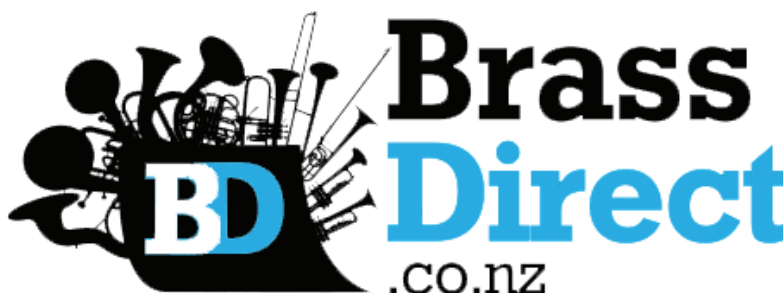
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Champion Brass 2026

Wellington City is rolling out the red carpet for Champion Brass 2026, AKA the NZ Brass Band Championships. We're thrilled to have the event land in the Capital for what is shaping up to be a great and memorable Championship.

We're very fortunate to have legendary organiser Mike Sander leading our Contest Committee again, bringing his wealth of experience and trademark enthusiasm to the role. Mike is supported by logistical wizard Denis Spurdle, along with Aaron Llyod, Kate Pilkington, Martyn Smith, Rangi Hall, Robert James and recent recruit Melanie Jiang. This vibrant mix of seasoned pros and fresh talent means we're perfectly positioned to deliver an unforgettable contest experience.

Our planning sessions are held regularly at our favourite local haunt, Waitoa Victoria. We've made it our mission to leave no detail unchecked. And yes — in the spirit of thorough research — we've been diligently sampling Waitoa's finest beers and non-alcoholic offerings to ensure we can confidently recommend the best sips to our visitors next April. Cheers to that!

Wellington's iconic Michael Fowler Centre will host the A and B Grades, with the contest hub in the Renouf Foyer featuring trade stands, a large screen, and refreshments. Just a 5-minute walk away, the Wellington Opera House will showcase the C, D, and Youth Grades.

With the two venues so close together, it's going to be a seamless, music-filled experience right in the heart of the Capital!

The solo and ensemble events are being held at Te Whaea, the National Dance and Drama Centre in Newtown. This fantastic venue, a favourite from the 2017 championships, has everything under one roof and is just a hop, skip, and a jump from the CBD. With space for over 350 cars, plus a handy bus stop right outside, access to the venue should be super easy.

Need a caffeine fix? There's a coffee caravan on-site to keep you fuelled up, and if the line's a bit long, don't worry—some of Wellington's best cafés are just a short downhill stroll away.

The Invitation Slow Melody and Champion of Champions events will be taking centre stage in Te Whaea's main theatre. We're planning to have a bar open in the evening, so you can sip, snack, and soak up the sensational sounds in style. It's going to be a vibe—don't miss it!

A huge shout-out to WellingtonNZ for jumping on board as our core sponsor—their support is helping us bring the magic to life, including the crowd favourite Parade of Bands, which will be staged on the waterfront opposite Te Papa, just like in 2017. So, if you were there, you know it's going to be epic! And with April's more settled weather, we're crossing our fingers (and toes!) for one of those glorious, sunshine-filled, can't-beat-it Wellington days.

On Sunday, 12 April, there will be a Gala Concert at 2.00pm in the Opera House featuring The National Band of New Zealand plus a guest band. Tickets will be available

soon from Ticketmaster. Look out for more details coming soon to our social media sites.

For supporters and visitors to Wellington during the championship dates, the city has a treasure trove of adventures waiting for you. Check out the wonders of Te Papa and the Wellington Museum—they're packed with stories, surprises, and Insta-worthy moments. Fancy a bit of politics? Pop by Parliament for a peek behind the scenes. Nature lovers, don't miss Zealandia in Karori, where native wildlife roam free.

For a classic Wellington experience, hop on the Cable Car, take in the views, then wander back down through the Botanical Gardens—it's pure chill, and most importantly, downhill. Got a bit more time? Head to Weta Cave in Miramar for a behind-the-scenes look at movie magic or stretch your legs with a scenic stroll (or energetic jog!) around the waterfront. And of course, no visit is complete without exploring the city's vibrant shopping quarters, quirky cafés, and buzzing bars. There's never a dull moment in the coolest little capital!

More information will be available very soon, and look out for our social media posts for the latest updates.

If you have an urgent query, please get in touch with Mike Sander or Aaron Lloyd in the first instance, at mike.sander@tpl.co.nz or aarongrahamlloyd@gmail.com

See you in April!

Absolutely Positively Wellington

Gig Guide

Friday 5 December

50's Up Brass Xmas Concert, 2.00pm at the Kaiapoi Club, Kaiapoi. Tickets \$5.

Saturday 6 December

North Shore Brass presents **Christmas @ Holy Trinity**, with special guest Tim Beveridge, 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, Auckland. Door sales available or book [HERE](#)

Sunday 7 December

Levin and Districts Brass 125th Anniversary concert, 2.00pm, at The Village Hall, Speldhurst Country Estate, Kimberley Rd, Levin. Door Sales only, cash or EFTPOS, adult \$20/child \$5.

Levin and Districts Brass 125th Anniversary dinner, at The George Café, Speldhurst Country Estate, Kimberley Rd, Levin. Fellowship from 4.30pm with dinner at 6.00pm. To attend, please confirm by RSVP to secretary@levinbrass@gmail.com ASAP.

Friday 12 December

50's Up Brass Xmas Concert, 2.00pm at the Cashmere Club, Christchurch. Tickets \$5.

Saturday 13 December

North Shore Brass Academy and Lake House Arts launch **The Great Christmas Concert** at 6.00pm in the outdoor gardens at Lake House Arts, Takapuna. Entry by Koha – gates open at 5.00pm

A Christmas Celebration:

Auckland City Brass returns to St Matthew-in-the-City for a festive spectacular featuring tenor

Christopher McRae, at 7.30pm. Tickets via [Eventfinda](#).

Sunday 14 December

In Your Community: Town Takeover by all three Woolston bands in central Christchurch,

1.30pm-2.00pm, at the Bridge of Remembrance, Cathedral Square, and the Margaret Mahy Playground. Then all three Woolston bands to perform together in the North Quad of the Christchurch Arts Centre 3.00pm-4.30pm. Free outdoor concerts.

Thursday 22 January 2026

Lunchtime concert by the National Youth Brass Band, 12.30pm at Ellen Melville Centre, Cnr High St & Freyberg Place, Auckland CBD. FREE event!

Saturday, 24 January

The National Youth Brass Band presents **Resonance**, 2.00pm at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, Auckland. Tickets are on sale now via TryBooking at www.trybooking.com/nz/BABD and door sales will also be available on the day.

A ticket would make an excellent present for a band enthusiast.

Saturday 7 February

Closing date for entries to the 2026 National Championships.

To have your events listed in the Gig Guide and on the BBANZ Facebook page, email the editor at bbanzeo@gmail.com



Gemma Lee

NYBB 2026

If you are in Auckland in late January, come along to hear the 2026 National Youth Brass Band on 24 January at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Parnell. This amazing venue will truly resonate with the glorious sound of brass and organ. The guest artist joining the band in concert is Gemma Lee. A highly sought-after pianist, music teacher, and arts manager, Gemma has recently branched out into organ study and currently serves as one of the organ scholars at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Parnell under the tutelage of Dr Phillip Smith, where she is also a member of the Cathedral Choir.

Alongside her organ and choral work, Gemma is an accomplished pianist and chamber musician with a Master of Music (First Class Honours) from the University of Auckland. Her performances have taken her to internationally renowned venues such as the Goldener Saal of the Vienna Musikverein, St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, and the Sydney Opera House. She also coaches senior music students at Dilworth School.

Musical director of the band, Mark Carter, said, "It will be a great privilege working with New Zealand's finest young brass and percussion players on my first NYBB course. Our concert at Holy Trinity will be an event not to miss.

"Let's fill the venue and give these fantastic young musicians the audience they deserve. I'm putting out a challenge to everyone who will be coming: bring at least one person who has never been to an NYBB concert before. Get your tickets at <https://www.trybooking.com/nz/BABD> and give the gift of music this Christmas."

National Secondary Schools' Brass Band – Musical Director For the Development Band

Applications are invited from musical directors with the appropriate experience and motivation to work with our outstanding young musicians during their annual training course during the school holidays in October 2026.

The role will involve working with MD Linda Filimoehala to

- review all player auditions
- to assist with assigning the seating positions within the two bands
- to select music for the Development Band
- to rehearse the Development Band during the training course to prepare it for a concert performance.

To apply, please send a CV detailing your musical training and experience, notes of support from two referees and a cover letter to Executive Officer bbanzeo@gmail.com by Friday, 30 January 2026.



World-class Williamses

BBANZ is delighted to announce that Glyn and Helen Williams will be joining Russell Gray as adjudicators for the 2026 National Championships. This is not the first time New Zealand has hosted a married couple in the judges' tent. In 2019, at the Blenheim contest, Russell was joined by his wife Mareika Gray.

Glyn Williams was born in Aberystwyth, Wales, where he was introduced to music by his uncle and enjoyed playing euphonium with Towyn Silver Royal Oakley and Menai Bridge, all local bands.

Glyn was appointed as solo euphonium with the Foden's Band in 1995, contributing to many contest victories, including the Swiss Open, All England Masters, French Open, Brass in Concert, North West Area Finals more than 10 times, the titles of National and British Open Brass Band Champions of Great Britain, English National Champions and All England International Masters Champions. 2012 was the pinnacle of this contesting success, when Foden's won both the Open and National Championships.

Glyn has been awarded individual awards at all the major contests, including a 'Double' in 2008 when he was awarded the best instrument prize at both the British Open and National Brass Band Championships. He has been awarded the best Euphonium prize on no fewer than nine occasions at the Brass In Concert Championships.

After 20 consecutive years of service at Foden's Band, Glyn made the decision to move to South Wales and to join the Cory Band in the summer of 2015, beginning a whole new chapter in his brass banding

career. Since then, Glyn has been pivotal in helping Cory to make history in an unprecedented Grand Slam year of 2016, when the Band won the European, British Open, National and Brass in Concert titles. In 2019, Glyn was part of the Cory Band, which again achieved the Grand Slam and added the Brass Pass UK Band of the Year title to their accolades. In 2017, Glyn was awarded Best Instrumentalist at the European Championships, and more recently, he was awarded Best Instrumentalist at the Welsh Regional Championships in 2022 and 2024.

In January 2025, Glyn celebrated 30 years as Principal Euphonium player with both Foden's and Cory, an achievement he is very proud of.

Helen Williams began playing the cornet at the age of ten, encouraged by her father, who played cornet with Poynton Band, where she also played for 10 years.

She joined The Marple Band in 1986 as Principal Cornet, performing with the band in many concerts and contest successes, culminating in Helen becoming the first female Principal Cornet to win the 1996 British Open Brass Band Championship. She was also awarded the Stanley Wainwright Memorial Trophy as the day's best soloist.

In December 1999, Helen was appointed as Flugel Horn Soloist with Foden's Band, where she remained for just over 15 years, enjoying many contest and concert performances. Contest successes with Foden's were many, including six successive years as North West Regional Champions, English Nationals Champions, All England Masters Champions, US Open Champions, three British Open wins

and of course the historic "double" when the band also won the National Championships in October 2012.

The Summer of 2015 saw Helen invited to take up the Flugel seat at the Cory Band, subsequently becoming part of the unprecedented Grand Slam band, which won the European, British Open, National and Brass in Concert titles in 2016. She was also awarded the Best Instrumentalist Prize at the Open and the Nationals, Best Flugel Horn at Brass in Concert, and earned the accolade of Player of the Year from her peers at Cory. Topping off an incredible year of personal achievements, Helen was also named Player of the Year by 4barsrest.com.

Of course, history does have a way of repeating itself, and in 2019 Cory again achieved the Grand Slam, this time also adding the title of Brass Pass UK Band of the Year to their crown. Her ten years at Cory have coincided with the most successful time in the band's history, accruing three British Open, three National, three European and five Brass in Concert titles to her tally.

Helen works as Deputy Registrar at the Brass Band Players' Registry, which covers all competing English and Welsh bands. She is proud to be a regular tutor at the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain and the National Youth Brass Band of Wales, and to have also taught at the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland and the National Youth Brass Band of Switzerland (where she was guest soloist in 2019).

Helen is proud to be an Adams Artist and an endorsee of Denis Wick Products.



*Award Recipients: (L to R) Shanon Kissell, Paul Hawkes, Vanessa Harris and Colin Hope
In Front: Bella Kissell with the Horace Boyes Baton award.*

News from Motueka District Brass Band

At the recently held Annual General Meeting of Motueka District Brass, two members were awarded Life Membership.

Paul Hawkes and Vanessa Harris were both awarded this honour for their dedication and continued work with the band. Brass Band Association Long Service Awards were awarded to both of them, as well as to Colin Hope and Shanon Kissell, whilst the band's own award for the Most Improved Junior Player was presented to Bella Kissell.

Paul Hawkes: 56-year Long Service award and Life Member

Paul started his banding career in 1969 in the Cornet section, until eventually he transferred to Eb Bass. In 1995, he "took the mace" as Drum Major, which he still carries. When not drum majoring, he plays Eb Bass

in the band.

Vanessa Harris: 40-year Long Service award and Life Member

Vanessa started in the Takaka Band on trombone in 1985. She remained with Takaka until she moved out of the area to attend Polytech in Nelson in 1992, at which stage she transferred to Motueka, remaining attached to her trombone. During her time with Motueka, she has fulfilled many roles, with her tenure as Librarian being her most significant.

Colin Hope: 30-year Long Service award

Colin's introduction to the banding world was via his son at the 1995 AGM, where he was elected to the committee as 'parent representative' and Drill Instructor. Since then, he has been integrated into the

band as a Percussionist, primarily as a Bass Drummer, with a smattering of other percussion instruments, whilst continuing as a committee member.

Shanon Kissell: 26-year Long Service. His banding life started with Marlborough District Brass in 1998 on the cornet before switching to Eb Bass. In 2009, he transferred to Nelson, where he remained until moving to Motueka in 2020. Whilst with Nelson, he played Euphonium, BBb Bass, and finally Eb Bass, which he still plays with us here in Motueka.

Bella Kissell received the Horace Boyes Baton for most improved Junior Player. Fourteen-year-old Bella joined the band earlier this year, playing baritone and is growing in confidence every week.



A Tri-Region Triumph

From 17–19 October, the Nelson Marlborough West Coast Brass Band Association held its annual Youth Band Camp—an inspirational weekend that brought together the region’s young brass and percussion players for three days of music, learning, and fabulous fun!

This year’s camp, held at the Sport and Recreation Centre in Murchison, welcomed 30 enthusiastic students. Participants ranged from absolute beginners who had been learning for just four months to seasoned young musicians with 10 years of experience. They travelled from Greymouth, Westport, Lake Rotoiti, Nelson, and Marlborough, representing the full spread of the association’s diverse and vibrant brass banding community.

Ages ranged from our youngest player at 8 to the eldest at 19, creating a dynamic environment where new learners were inspired by older role models, and experienced musicians enjoyed the chance to mentor and support their younger peers.

The band was expertly led by Musical Director Elliot Gray, whose energy and rapport with the students proved exceptional. Elliot’s rehearsals were fun, focused, and motivating—quickly

transforming a group of mixed experience levels into a cohesive ensemble brimming with confidence.

Supporting Elliot was a talented team of tutors, Ross Gerritson and Sophie Ward-Murray from Nelson and Nathan Keoghan and Dylan Taylor from Westport. Together, they provided sectional coaching, encouragement, and musical guidance that helped each student—no matter their level—make real progress over the weekend.

No camp runs smoothly without good food, and this year’s catering duo, “Granny & Annie”, were nothing short of legendary. They kept hungry teenagers (and tutors!) fuelled with warm, hearty meals and plenty of home-style comfort. Their efforts were appreciated by all and became a talking point almost as popular as the music itself.

The camp concluded with a Sunday afternoon concert, proudly performed for an audience of 45 Murchison locals. The programme included a special highlight: Spencer Keoghan from Westport performed a euphonium solo with the band, impressing the audience with his confidence and musicianship. What began as a polite crowd soon warmed into enthusiastic supporters—

with calls for “more music!” Unfortunately, the entire repertoire had already been performed, so a repeat of the last item was called for. This was flattering proof of how impressively the band had come together in just three days!

Perhaps the greatest endorsement came from the students themselves. Even the youngest and most junior participants were asking if they could “do band camp again next weekend.”

The Nelson Marlborough West Coast Brass Band Association extends its sincere thanks to Pub Charity and Pelorus Trust for their generous funding support, which made the event possible.

Association President, Nathan Keoghan, expressed particular appreciation for the strong support shown from all regions and praised Elliot Gray’s exceptional leadership throughout the weekend.

With another successful camp now behind us, and many students already counting down, plans are already stirring for next year.

Till next year—bring on Youth Band Camp 2026!





WISHING YOU ALL A VERY

~ MERRY CHRISTMAS ~

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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NBS Nelson City Brass with the finalist of the Young Brass Musician of the Year.

Tom Hutchinson in Nelson

Nelson played host to an unforgettable weekend of brass music as internationally acclaimed cornet virtuoso Tom Hutchinson brought his talent and expertise to the region. Hutchinson adjudicated the New Zealand Young Brass Musician of the Year competition, offering invaluable insights to the country's rising stars through lessons and workshops. The weekend culminated in a spectacular concert, An Evening with Tom Hutchinson, where he joined NBS Nelson City Brass at the iconic Nelson Cathedral to celebrate the rich tradition of brass music in the region.

Nine young musicians from around the country gathered in Nelson for the Young Brass Musician of the Year competition. Each finalist was required to perform two contrasting pieces: a slow melody and a technical work. The slow melody allowed competitors to demonstrate musicality, tone quality, and expressive phrasing, while the technical piece tested precision, agility, and control. This dual format allowed Hutchinson to hear over 15 minutes from each player over the afternoon. Thank you to Brendan Agnew and Zeb Wulff, who accompanied the soloists.

The finalists were Jonty Zydenbos - Soprano Cornet; Celine Wu - Cornet; Luca Cable - Cornet; Monika Duncan - Cornet; Emily Sullivan - Flugel Horn; Mia Yee - Flugel Horn; Amy Laithwaite - Trombone; Walter Hughes - Euphonium; and Logan Ready - Trombone.

First place was awarded to Mia Yee from Addington Brass, with Jonty Zydenbos (Hutt City Brass) second, and Logan Ready (Marlborough District Brass) third.

The highlight of Tom's weekend with the band was undoubtedly his feature concert in the Nelson Cathedral. His command of the cornet is well-known and unquestioned, but to hear it in person was breathtaking. His mastery of the technical aspects of playing, combined with exquisite control and sound, really makes him a complete package. The standing ovation at the end of the concert was a fitting tribute and recognition of his excellent performance.

Tom performed *The Paragon* by E. Sutton; *Don't Doubt Him Now* by L. Ballantine, *Tico Tico* arr. J. Iveson, *Fuego!* by P. Harper and *Mr Bojangles* arr. D Griffiths.

The final part of the weekend was a workshop run by Tom in the theatre at Nayland College. The focus of the session was exploring daily practise routines and the need to be consistent in what and how we practise, with the underlying message being that if we don't put time into maintaining control of our sound, flexibility and technique, we can't expect those things to be ready when we call on them!

Reflecting on the week, Tom said, "It's been an incredible week in New Zealand with Nelson City Brass. The band were such fantastic hosts and have some extremely talented players around the stand. They recognise the importance of developing youth not only within the band, but across the country, attracting players from all over to compete in the New Zealand Young Brass Musician final, hosted by the band. The competition was a huge success, and it will no doubt attract more young musicians, given the high standard of the participants. A special thanks must also go to Sheena Whitehouse, Nigel Weeks and Ross Gerritsen for their hospitality, friendship and the invitation to visit the band this past week. It's been amazing!"



Next-Gen

In this issue, Lachlan Spence catches up with Kodi Rasmussen, who was interviewed back in 2018. Back then, Kodi was playing with Marlborough District Brass and the National Youth Band and was about to start studying trumpet at the New Zealand School of Music in Wellington the following year. And now, 25-year-old Kodi has had a composition selected as a test piece for the 2026 national contest.

What are you doing now?

Right now, I'm based in Wellington, working full-time as a composer while balancing a range of contract projects on the side. Living here has been great for my creativity, as it keeps me close to the ensembles, collaborators, and performance groups I work with. Alongside my full-time role as Resident Composer and Repertoire Co-Ordinator for the Wellington Chapel, I'm writing music for a variety of commissions, currently including concert works and a musical, and I'm also developing my composition portfolio. I also play with Wellington Brass, which keeps me connected to performing and the banding community. So at the moment it's a mix of steady writing, contract composing and arranging projects, performing with Wellington Brass, and ongoing creative work.

What have been some of your musical highlights?

Some of my biggest musical highlights include having my work performed by groups like the NZSO, NZ String Quartet, and Wellington Brass, and winning the Orchestra's Choice Award at the NZSO Todd Young Composer's Competition. Writing music for shows like 'Too Bald Clowns' and 'Delightfool' has also been a standout, along with returning to Marlborough Civic Orchestra with my recent piece *Tenfold*. Working with young musicians and my time teaching and directing music projects in Cambodia were also really meaningful experiences. Overall, the highlights are the moments where musical collaboration and community come together.

What positive impacts has brass banding had on your musical success?

Brass banding has honestly been one of the biggest influences on my musical journey. Playing in bands has kept me sharp as a performer, but it's also shaped the way I write music. You learn so much just by sitting in the middle of that sound: how parts fit together, how to listen properly, and how to work as a team. It's also opened a lot of doors for me. I've met great players, worked with notable conductors, and taken on projects I wouldn't have had access to otherwise. Plus, teaching and helping out younger musicians through banding has made me a better communicator. Overall,



brass banding has kept me inspired, connected, and constantly learning, and that's had a huge impact on where I am today.

What would you say to young brass musicians who'd like to explore composition?

I'd say absolutely go for it. The great thing about being a brass player is that you already understand how instruments breathe, phrase, blend, and balance, and that's a massive head start in composition. Start small: write for the people around you, your band, your section, or even just yourself. Hearing your music played live is the best teacher you'll ever have. Don't worry about making something "perfect." Just experiment, try ideas, and learn as you go. Ask players and conductors for feedback. Brass band musicians are usually more than happy to help. And listen widely, not just to brass music but to orchestral, film, contemporary, whatever inspires you. Most importantly, enjoy the process. Composition is just another way of expressing your musicianship, and the sooner you start exploring it, the faster your voice will grow!

Tell us about composing "Where the Light Falters"

Where the Light Falters is my first composed test piece, which an international panel has selected as the C Grade set test piece for the 2026 New Zealand Brass Band Championships. This was a personal piece to write. It explores that feeling of moving through uncertainty, the moments where things feel dim, heavy, or unclear, but you keep pushing forward anyway. Musically, I wanted to capture the quiet tension of

those darker moments, while still letting a sense of hope break through. The piece moves between fragile, reflective textures and more powerful, expansive sections. That contrast represents those shifts we experience when we're navigating difficult periods: the dips, the hesitation, and then the sudden clarity or resolve. It's also a piece that gave me the chance to lean into my orchestral style, with long lines, rich harmony, and a focus on atmosphere. Hearing bands bring it to life, especially the way they shape the slow, expressive sections, will be one of the most rewarding parts of the process. Overall, *Where the Light Falters* is about finding brightness in places where things feel uncertain and trusting that the light will return, even if it takes time.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for helping you with your achievements thus far?

Absolutely, I've been really lucky to have a lot of support along the way. First and foremost, I'm grateful to the teachers and mentors who've guided me, especially during my studies. They helped shape my musical voice and pushed me to grow both creatively and professionally. I also owe a huge thanks to the ensembles and musicians who have trusted me with their time and talent, from brass bands to orchestras and chamber groups. Having people believe in your music and bring it to life is something I never take for granted. My colleagues, collaborators, and the people I work with in Wellington have also played a big part in my journey. Their encouragement, feedback, and friendship have made the process so much more rewarding. And

finally, my friends and family, their support behind the scenes has been massive. They've been there through every late night, deadline, and new opportunity. Overall, I wouldn't be where I am without the community around me, and I'm really grateful for all of them.

What do you hope to achieve in the future?

Looking ahead, I want to keep growing as a composer while taking on projects that push me creatively. I'd love to write more large-scale works, both for brass band and for orchestra, and continue building a portfolio that reflects my voice across different styles. I'm also aiming to expand my work in media composition, whether that's for TV, theatre, or other collaborative projects. I really enjoy storytelling through music, so developing more long-term creative partnerships is a big goal. Another focus is helping strengthen the brass band community through arranging, mentoring younger musicians, and contributing new works to the repertoire. And with my partner and I planning to move to Europe next year, I'm excited to connect with new ensembles, new creative circles, and new opportunities over there. Overall, I hope to keep creating meaningful music, continue collaborating with great people, and find ways for my work to resonate with performers and audiences alike.

Quickfire questions

What type of music do you listen to most? (2018) Honestly, whatever is playing on the radio. But I'd prefer to listen to orchestral, big band and brass band works.

(Now) Surf, Indy and rock/pop.

Other interests? (2018) Composing/arranging music. Acting/performing. Video games. Being with my friends and family. (Now) Being outside and active with friends.

Favourite food? (2018) Sushi. (Now) Apple cinnamon crumble with vanilla ice cream!

Favourite place? (2018) My bedroom. (Now) The Wellington outdoors.

Favourite film? (2018) I don't really have one. I'd watch anything if it's not a horror film.

(now) *Hundreds of Beavers*.

Favourite instrument? (2018) To play, trumpet. My favourite in general: Clarinet, French Horn or Marimba. (Now) Piano.

Favourite piece of music? (2018) Mahler's *5th Symphony*. (Now) I'm listening to a lot of Ravel.

What do you dislike most? (2018) Nothing. (Now) Probably when Sibelius decides to crash, exactly when I'm feeling inspired. Truly character-building stuff.

For the more technical amongst us, what make of instrument do you play?

(2018) Yamaha Xeno Trumpet with a 16C4 mouthpiece.

JP Cornet with a 4 mouthpiece.

Finally, an Eastman Flugelhorn with a 4FL mouthpiece.

(Now) Smith Watkins Cornet, 4B Dennis Wick Mouthpiece.

Conference and AGM Summary

Now in its fourth year, the conference workshops are proving to be a useful event alongside our AGM weekend. This year, we started with a presentation from David Bremner, aimed primarily at musical directors, but its content was very interesting to band managers and members alike. David shared his philosophy on building a band both musically and culturally, setting realistic goals and how he prepares his players for performances.

In the first of the split workshop sessions, Vickie van Uden detailed how Woolston Brass runs its Wider Opportunity instrumental music programme in primary schools. Vickie is the driver of this programme, which has enabled over 800 young students to play a brass instrument. In the other room, Carolyn Cordery, Adjunct Professor at Victoria University's School of Accounting and Commercial Law, gave an informative presentation on what the annual accounts say about an organisation, protecting your assets, especially from fraud, budgets and opportunities to maximise revenue.

The group came together again to hear from Jessica Palalagi, the General Manager of The Arts Foundation. Some quick facts from Jessica's presentation include that 117,912 people are employed in the arts in NZ and that in 2024 the arts contributed \$17.5 billion to GDP. However, 50% of New Zealanders don't think the arts are for them because they're not creative enough, academic enough, wealthy enough or the arts are seen as intimidating. The Arts Foundation aims to break down barriers so more people can engage in the arts and creativity, and to rally funders to support this. The Arts Foundation runs the Boosted crowdfunding website, which is for arts projects only.

Back to split workshop sessions, where Cameron Burnett from the NZ Army Band gave a very practical presentation on how to use social media to tell your story and boost engagement, which had most people in the room changing their phone settings, ready to take their first reel to post. Next door, BBANZ Board member Leigh Martin outlined how the Association has been helping individual bands with their training and development needs. Whether this is through arranging a mentor, a workshop leader or some funding, the programme has supported 18 different events in the last year. The biggest takeaway from the session is that Leigh can also arrange support for your band.

Most of the workshops were live-streamed and can still be watched on the BBANZ Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/brassbanz/> - 4.5K have already viewed David Bremner's presentation.

Those who attended the sessions agreed it was a valuable opportunity to gain information and ask questions. But best of all was the opportunity to share ideas and chat with people in similar situations.

Quick notes from the AGM meeting:

This was the first year that delegates could attend the meeting online with the ability to vote and speak.

The 2027 National Contest in Invercargill will now be held from Wednesday, 14 to Saturday, 17 April. The reason for the change is to enable the National Youth Brass Band to be part of a youth festival sponsored by the NZSO featuring the NYBB alongside the National Youth Orchestra and National Youth Choir.

The location for the 2028 contest has yet to be decided because no applications were received by the original closing date. Following the extension of the closing date and opening of the location up to all of New Zealand, three expressions of interest were received. The Board will now engage with the applicants and will announce the location early next year.

In a break from tradition, the discussion on the Remits was uneventful and over rather quickly, with the only changes to the Contest Bylaws being that soloists at the national contest, other than in the Masters and Slow Melody events, can only play in one section. This change is a return to the status quo from 2020. Delegates did not support changing the performance of the Sacred Item to the Saturday nor the introduction of an Open Own Choice solo.

The 2026 Conference and AGM will be held in Christchurch on Saturday, 7 and Sunday, 8 November.

Helen Lee – Executive Officer



BBANZ Charitable Trust
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Grant Applications Open

Financial assistance available to individuals and organisations seeking to further brass music education, or performance excellence, in New Zealand

Application criteria and forms available from BBANZ Web Site
www.brassbanz.org/bbanz-charitable-trust/

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Planned bequests enable your kindness to live on and help the next generation of brass musicians

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Free Workshops

The NZSO brass and percussion section is on tour in December throughout the North Island, during which David Bremner, NZSO principal trombone, is offering free workshops for bands before the concerts. Named *Brass Ready - the Art of Preparation*, David will share invaluable tips on getting mentally and physically ready for a performance. The dates and venues of these workshops are listed opposite.

Following the workshop, internationally acclaimed musician and conductor Gail Williams joins the NZSO Brass and Percussion for a celebration of all things brass in the concert programme *Summer Brass*.

The NZSO Brass and Percussion sections bring a bold, majestic style to Christopher Mowat's arrangement of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, Samuel Barber's *Mutations* from Bach and Henri Tomasi's dramatic, sombre, stately and theatrical *Fanfares Liturgiques*.

But don't forget the reason for the season! With Christmas just around the corner, nothing gets you ready for the festive season more than a Brass ensemble performing some Christmas classics!

Summer Brass is a great concert for the whole whānau, featuring a mix of Baroque classics, fantastic fanfares and some Christmas classics.

The NZSO has a special offer for the Wellington concert on 5 December. A 15% discount on all tickets. Simply go **HERE** and enter "NZSO15" in the 'Enter Offer Code' box. Plus a Family Deal for four tickets (two adults and two children) for \$90.

The Family Deal is also available at other concert locations. Four tickets (two adults and two children) for \$90. **Book HERE**

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 10

• NAPIER
 5:00PM, ASHER HALL, 1 DALTON STREET, NAPIER

THURSDAY DECEMBER 11

• ROTORUA
 5:00PM, LITTLE THEATRE 1-8 AMOHAU STREET, VICTORIA, ROTORUA

FRIDAY DECEMBER 12

• HAMILTON
 5:00PM, HAMILTON CITY BRASS BANDROOM, 245 CLYDE STREET, HAMILTON EAST.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 13

• TAURANGA
 3:00PM, TAURANGA CITY BRASS BANDROOM, 10 YATTON STREET, GREERTON, TAURANGA.

CONTACT HELEN AT BBANZEO@GMAIL.COM FOR MORE DETAILS



05–13 December

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National Secondary Schools' Brass Band

Musical Director: Linda Filimoevala, Auckland
and Nic Scott, Christchurch
Course Manager: Malcolm Barr
manager@nssbb.org
M: 021 606 428

2026 National Contest in Wellington 8 to 11 April
Contact person Mike Sander
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Thank you to all those who contributed articles and photographs to
The Mouthpiece in 2025.

Your input gave us a vibrant and interesting magazine worth reading.

A big vote of thanks to Rhys McDonnell, JP Musical Instruments and
Brass Direct for sponsoring *The Mouthpiece*.

Wishing you all a safe, joyful, and restful holiday season.

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If you would like to support the activities of the National Youth Brass Band please contact the **Executive Officer**.

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