



NEW ZEALAND

Mouthpiece

The Official Journal of the Brass Band Association of New Zealand

Volume 71 | Issue 5 June 2025 ISSN 2744-6298 (Online)

New Zealand Mouthpiece is proudly sponsored by JP Musical Instruments | www.musicways.co.nz | 09 477 0384 | info@musicways.co.nz

John Rhind Community Partnerships presents

An Evening of Melody



JOHN
RHIND
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS

2025 Festival
of Brass



A featured event of the
2025 Festival of Brass

8.00pm Wednesday 2 July
James Hay Theatre

Tickets \$10/\$15/\$20

plus cabaret seating for tables of 8 \$200

Book at Ticketmaster (Booking fee may apply)

Banding Together

National contest entries have closed for Christchurch 2025, with 37 bands represented and an estimated 1,500 competitors, so it will be a busy five days for our Contest Manager, Contest Administrator, the Contest Committee and the many volunteers. It is very exciting to have this many bands and soloists at our national contest, including five bands from Australia. In fact, it is 34 years since we last had this many bands attending our premier event.



Entries are again high in the Junior Slow Melody, with a record 45 entries this year. It is wonderful to continue to see strong participation in these youth classes. The growth in our youth playing base is a testament to the fantastic work that tutors, conductors and administrators do throughout the country and is reinforced by the 87 applications we received for the 2025 National Secondary Schools' Brass Band course in October. A reminder too that applications are now open for the 2026 National Youth Band that will again be assembling in January.

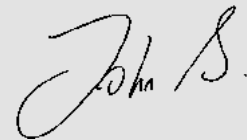
So much great work is happening within our organisation, so let's celebrate this by sharing information about our successes.

The Mouthpiece is one of the forums you can use to do this, and our Annual Conference is the other. This gathering is an ideal opportunity for conductors, players and administrators to share ideas through workshops and discussion sessions. The BBANZ 2025 Annual Conference will be held in Wellington on Saturday, 8 November, including some social time and a guest speaker and then the AGM on Sunday, 9 November. The conference weekend provides a chance to engage with a broad cross-section of our members through varied training workshops. Participation is the key to its success so please let us know what you would like to learn more about or feel we should discuss at this year's conference.

One area we are particularly keen to discuss and brainstorm at this year's conference is how we can help secure the future of our organisation financially. We continue to rely on the generosity of gaming trusts and foundations to operate nearly everything we do, whether it be the contest, representative bands or education. Without these grants, we couldn't function. I suspect it is a very similar situation for our member bands and associations. For reasons that continue to bewilder and frustrate, we struggle to meet the measures of Creative New Zealand, an organisation designed and funded to support the arts. Therefore, we must look to secure our future by supporting ourselves.

The BBANZ Charitable Trust is the ideal mechanism we have for this purpose. Through several generous bequests the Trust is on its way to building a financial base from which to help support brass banding in New Zealand. However it does have some way to go before we have a fund large enough to make a difference and allow significant reinvestment into the growth and development of our organisation. The term used is "Giving while Living" either through donations or payroll giving, as some in our movement are already doing. Many of us have gained so much from our lifetime passion for music, so perhaps it is time to consider how you can give back by providing others the opportunity to enjoy the same experiences. I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas on this important topic. Remember, this is your organisation.

I wish all bands and players well in your preparation for Christchurch 2025. May your bandroom be full of beautiful music and a smile permanently on your conductor's face. I am looking forward to catching up with many of you next month.



John Sullivan – President
Brass Band Association of New Zealand

Winning Compositions

SOUNZ Centre for New Zealand Music and the Brass Band Association of New Zealand are proud to announce the 2025 SOUNZ Brass Composition Prize winner and finalists.

This year's adjudicator was Dunedin-based composer, conductor, clarinettist, and Emeritus Professor of Music Peter Adams, who shared the following comments:

"2025 saw 29 entries competing for the SOUNZ Brass Composition Prize, and these works displayed a wide range of approaches, musical languages and styles. All showed craftsmanship, idiomatic writing for brass and excellent notation and score presentation. This impressive set of compositions made the judging process difficult but rewarding, with all works having something to say and something to offer the listener.

Most entries followed the 'slow melody' brief by allowing the brass performer scope for expressive phrasing, cantabile playing, and

to showcase the beauty of tone and control.

The best piano writing made use of more than just the middle register of the instrument and showed good understanding of pedalling and of voicing of harmonic progressions.

The very best entries had real personality and articulated a unique identity and style through individual and consistent harmonic language and well-shaped and memorable melodic writing. Their structure and formal organisation were effective: events were well-paced, and these works moved seamlessly between sections and intensity levels.

I want to sincerely thank all entrants for their creative work, and for taking this opportunity to contribute to New Zealand's rapidly growing original repertoire for brass."

WINNER: David Woodcock: Summer Evening

David writes: "I am delighted to be selected

as the winner of the 2025 SOUNZ Brass Composition Prize. I would like to thank both SOUNZ and the National Brass Band Association for promoting this competition; it is proving an important resource for new brass music in New Zealand."

FINALISTS:

YuYang Ding: Orchid in the Rain

YuYang writes: "It is an honour to be selected as a finalist for the 2025 SOUNZ Brass Composition Prize. I thoroughly enjoyed the compositional process as I exposed myself to a relatively unfamiliar genre of instrumentation and the tenor horn's lyrical qualities."

Keith Moss: Field Notes in Autumn

Keith writes: "I'm delighted to be a finalist in the 2025 SOUNZ Brass Composition Prize. Live recordings and performances of new works are invaluable to composers, and the support of SOUNZ in our work is equally important. I am looking forward to hearing the piece in Christchurch."

Gig Guide

Thursday 5 June

Free workshop with David Bremner, 5.00pm to 6.00pm at the Marlborough Bandroom, Blenheim. All welcome.

Friday 6 June

New Zealand Army Band – **Brass in Concert** 7.00pm at the Oamaru Opera House, 90 Thames Street, Oamaru. Tickets [HERE](#)

Saturday 7 June

New Zealand Army Band – **Brass in Concert** 7.00pm at St Mary's Anglican Church, 24 Church Street, Timaru. Tickets [HERE](#)

Sunday 8 June

"Community Gisborne" presents the Gisborne Civic Brass Band in concert, 2.00pm at St Andrew's Church, 176 Cobden Street, Gisborne (next to Pak'nSave). Koha at the door.

Tuesday 10 June

Free workshop with David Bremner, 4.30pm to 5.30pm at the Due Drop Centre, 770 Great South Road, Manukau. All welcome.

Thursday 12 June

Free workshop with David Bremner, 5.30pm to 6.30pm at the Salvation Army Centre, 3 – 11 Aubrey Street, Whangarei. All welcome.

Saturday 14 June

Waikato Bay of Plenty Association AGM from 10.00am at Matamata band room, Huia Street, Matamata. All welcome.

RNZN Band 65th Anniversary Concert, 2.00pm at the Bruce Mason Centre,

Takapuna.

Tickets are just \$7 and are available from [Ticketmaster](#)

Thursday 19 June

Woolston Concert Brass presents **Contest Sounds** (a guest performance from Woolston Junior Band) at 7.30pm at the Aldersgate Centre, 309 Durham Street, Christchurch. Book [HERE](#)

Sunday 22 June

Addington Brass Band and Addington Workshop Band will present a "**Major Works**" concert, 2.00pm in the Transitional Cathedral, 234 Hereford Street, Christchurch. This is a FREE community event.

Woolston Brass presents **Seriously Brass: The Contesters**, 7.30pm at The Piano, 156 Armagh Street, Christchurch. Book [HERE](#)

Monday 23 June

Morning Melodies by Kumeu Vintage Brass, 11.00am at the Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna.

Wednesday 2 to Sunday 6 July

2025 National Championships, aka the Festival of Brass, Christchurch Town Hall.

Wednesday

Events from 10.00am. Solos for Under 15, Juniors, Masters and Open Slow Melody. All percussion events. All Open ensembles/duets.

Junior Champion of Champions from 5.00pm

Invitation Slow Melody from 8.00pm

Thursday

From 9.00am – Open solos and Junior Ensembles/Duets and Slow Melody.

Open Champion of Champions from 7.30pm

Friday

Sacred/Reflective item and Test Selection for A, B and C Grades. Youth Grade contest.

Saturday

Own Choice selection for A, B and C Grades.

D Grade contest.

Sunday

The Street March from 10.30am, followed by presentation of the marching awards.

Sunday 13 July

Woolston Junior Band presents *KidsFest Big Brass Bang*, 2.30pm, followed by try a brass instrument, Te Raekura Redcliffs School Hall, 113 Beachville Road, Redcliffs, Christchurch. Book [HERE](#)

Sunday 20 July

Papakura Brass in Concert - featuring soloist Mike Ford from NBS Nelson City Brass, 2.00pm, at Papakura Off Broadway Musical Theatre, Papakura, Auckland.

Thursday 31 July

Closing date for submission of original test pieces and solos for the 2026 national contest. See page 6 for details.

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



The New Zealand Veterans Band. Read about its recent tour on page 16.

Obituary

Robert Anthony (Tony) Cowan BEM, Captain, RNZIR. 7.12.1939-26.4.2025

Life Member of: Brass Whanganui, Brass Band Association of New Zealand and the Friends of the Royal Whanganui Opera House.

Tony's lifelong relationship with brass bands began in 1948 at the age of eight, when he joined Whanganui's Queen Alexandra's Own Band, starting on the cornet, adding later the flugel, tenor horn, baritone and euphonium, all of which he excelled at.

In 1963, he enlisted in the New Zealand Army as a soldier to join the Army Band. Ultimately, he became Drum Major of the band, and in this capacity, he revolutionised the concept of display marching. There have been many highlights for Tony, including leading and training bands of various grades to win New Zealand marching championships and leading the National Band of New Zealand at the World Championships in Kerkrade, the Netherlands, winning a gold medal there.

One of his biggest challenges was combining the New Zealand Army Band and the National Band of New Zealand for the opening ceremony of the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch. Among the spectators at that event was Queen Elizabeth II. This event was televised worldwide and generated international demand for the Army Band to perform at tattoos and concerts. 1974 was the climax of his NZ Army Band career and the achievement of his childhood dream: to drum major the National Band of New Zealand.

Many people recognise Tony as a drum major and trainer of bands. Living in Burnham, he played for and drum majored the Christchurch Fire Brigade band and then Woolston for many years. His successes with bands at all levels of competition and with the NZ Army Band and the National Bands of New Zealand are well known. However, Tony was a musician in his own right and was a playing member and Drum Major of the National Band of New Zealand several times.

He served on the Brass Band Association National Executive, was Chief Military Judge for New Zealand and was National Contest Manager for several years. Concerned about the declining marching level, he organised national drum major/band trainer and drill judge seminars from 1976 to 1992 throughout New Zealand and Australia. He also managed the NZ Lions Youth Band to Brisbane in 1991.

Tony wrote the book on Drum Majoring, deleting the whistle that all bands used, and led the band movement by example with boundless enthusiasm to set the high standard evident in our top bands today.

On his return to Whanganui in 1985, he returned to his original band, now Brass Whanganui. As an instrumentalist, he contested with success, was active in leading junior groups, and was always busy planning concerts in Whanganui to further his love of banding and band music. He acted as concert director and compere on many occasions. One of his most satisfying activities during recent years was playing in the Auxiliary band, assisting youngsters to develop their musical ability.

Even when he had given up active involvement, he was a strong supporter of brass banding. He served as Brass Whanganui President and was Chairman of the Steering Committee that amalgamated the Whanganui bands. In his final years, he was Patron of Brass Whanganui. He was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for his service to the Army and banding in NZ.

Tony saw his involvement in the brass band movement as a very fulfilling and challenging time. In his words:

A brass band is a wonderful organisation to join, make music and become part of a big band family that spans the world.



National Contest Preview

The 2025 National Championships could be called an Australasian Championship as five bands from across the Tasman join 32 bands from around New Zealand in Christchurch in July.

The championships get underway on Wednesday, 2 July with the Junior Solos and Open Ensembles. The day's highlights will be the Junior Champion of Champions in the late afternoon and, later that evening, the Invitation Slow Melody. The performers in the Invitation Slow Melody are Walter Hughes (2024 Junior Champion of Champions), Jeshua Oram, Aishah Leitner, Keina Rollinson, and David Maas, along with the winner and place-getters from the 2024 event, Anthony Smith, Kevin Hickman and Steven Booth, plus the New Zealand Champion of Champions, Mike Ford. One more spot is up for grabs in this prestigious event for the Open Slow Melody event winner earlier in the day. While the judging panel decides, the audience will be treated to the premiere performances of the three finalists of the SOUNZ slow melody composition competition, performed by Kay MacKenzie, Lachlan Spence, and Brad Mancer.

The Open Solo and Junior Ensemble events start at 9.00am on Thursday, 3 July and conclude that evening with the Open Champion of Champions starting at 7.30pm, with free admission.

What can you and our chief adjudicators, Frédéric Théodoloz and Nick Johnson, expect

to hear in the band events? Performances in the A Grade Own Choice section feature some of the most challenging major works, including Thierry Deleruyelle's *Sand and Stars*, the test piece at the 2023 British Open, Myth Forest (*Stig Nordhagen*), *Other Lives* (Oliver Waespi), *Brussels Requiem* (Bert Appermont) and works by New Zealand composers Todd Smith and Jack Bewley. Defending champions Wellington Brass, looking for a historic seventh win in a row, will have nine bands to contend with, including two from Australia, plus newly promoted Hutt City Brass and Auckland City Brass.

Without last year's winners, Tupou College, at the contest and with the promotion for two bands to A Grade, the B Grade contest is wide open, with seven bands preparing to battle it out for the title. The Own Choice music includes *Legacy* (Tom Davoren), *Quaternity – Forces of the Ancients* by Australian composer Benjamin Tubb-Hearne, *Fight For Liberty* (Mario Burki) and *New World Sketches* (Dan Price).

Last year, there was just .25 of a point between Matamata Brass and Rolleston Brass, and both are back to contest the C Grade title. But there is a huge field of 12 bands, including one from Australia and newly promoted Maamaloa Brass. The Own Choice section is a mix of old and new works, including *Albinus Variations* (Etienne Crausaz), *I, Daedalus* (Andrea Price), *Compostela* (Thierry Deleruyelle) and

Moorside Suite (Gustav Holst).

Seven bands will compete in the D Grade contest on Saturday, performing the test hymn *Be Still* by David J Evans, arr. Stephen Tighe and an Own Choice and Stage March. What an opportunity for the four-strong contingent from Christchurch up against challengers from Wellington and Otago Southland as none of these bands have won the D Grade title since 1998.

Also at the contest is Box Hill Academy Brass from Victoria, Australia, with its young players performing in the solo events, plus the Youth Grade contest on Friday.

Admission is free to all band events on Friday and Saturday to allow all supporters, band members, and the general public to hear as many bands as possible. So come to the Christchurch Town Hall. The championships will conclude on Sunday, 6 July, for the Parade of Bands street march outside the Town Hall, with the step-off at 10.30am and a prizegiving at 11.45am in the Town Hall.

We are all looking forward to bringing you a great contest. Still, if you can't make it there, you can watch the events on live streaming at www.brassbanned.com hosted by the inimitable and energetic Tim Kelly.

Helen Lee – Contest Administrator

2025 Festival
of Brass

CPBBA Camp

On a bright sunny weekend in May, the annual Canterbury Association band camp was held at Living Springs camp on Banks Peninsula. The camp has been run for many years by Peter Thorby, who has made it his mission to ensure as many young players as possible enjoy brass banding. The camp is also an opportunity for the young conductors of Canterbury to gain experience, such as Aishah Leitner, who is the camp's musical director for the next three years. Our thanks to Kiwi Gaming Foundation for its support.

Here's what 13-year-old Toby from Nor'west Brass had to say about the weekend.

"I came to this camp for the first time this year. When I arrived, I was greeted by Peter, who told me the point of the camp was to have fun. This could not be more accurate. Between the friendly people, cool activities, all the practise and the great food (and hot chocolates), it was easy to have fun the whole time. Not only did I make some good friends, but I was also given great advice for playing in bands. On the first day, we did a bit of practise, had pizza, and then went to bed. On Saturday, we woke up at 7:30am for breakfast, practised, morning tea, practised, lunch, activities (archery and shooting), marching practise, dinner, watched a movie, then played Spotlight. On Sunday, we had breakfast, practised, morning tea, practised and finally, the concert. If you play a brass instrument and enjoy playing or even just like having fun, you should definitely come along."



Making it all happen ... Mel Graham, Jordan Seaton, Aishah Leitner, Peter Thorby, Chris Gourlay and Vickie van Uden.



Call For Scores

The Brass Band Association of New Zealand (**BBANZ**) invites submissions of **brass band works** by New Zealand composers to be considered as the test selections for the 2026 National Brass Band Championships, to be held in Wellington in April 2026.

Submissions will be assessed by a panel of prominent figures in the international brass band movement, and their shortlist of works will be presented to the adjudicator(s) for the 2026 contest to make the final selection.

The composer will retain all rights to the sale of their work(s), and all competing bands will be required to purchase the work from the composer or their representative. There is no cash prize associated with the selection of a work.

Submission of a recording (either live or computer-generated) is **optional** but highly encouraged.

BBANZ Recommends that works not exceed the following duration and percussion requirements for the given grades:

A Grade: 18 minutes, 4 percussionists (including timpani)

B Grade: 15 minutes, 4 percussionists (including timpani)

C Grade: 12 minutes, 3 percussionists (including timpani)

D Grade: 6 minutes*, 3 percussionists (including timpani)

**The D Grade test selection is to be a sacred/reflective item.*

Test Solos

The Brass Band Association of New Zealand (**BBANZ**) also invites submissions of **solo brass works with piano accompaniment** by New Zealand composers to be considered as the open solo test selections for the 2026 National Brass Band Championships, to be held in Wellington in April 2026.

The composer will retain all rights to the sale of their work(s), and all competitors will be required to purchase the work from the composer.

Submission of a recording (either live or computer-generated) is **optional** but highly encouraged

BBANZ recommends that works not exceed 8 minutes in duration

Solos are sought for the following

categories: Championship Bb Cornet, Amateur Bb Cornet, Eb Soprano Cornet, Bb Flugelhorn, Eb Tenor Horn, Bb Baritone, Tenor Trombone, Bass Trombone, Bb Euphonium, Eb Bass, BBb Bass

Key Dates

Submissions close: Thursday 31 July 2025

Test selections announced:

Thursday 23 October 2025

Open Solo performances:

Thursday 9 April 2026

A, B and C Grade Test Selection performances: Friday 10 April 2026

D Grade Test Selection performances:

Saturday 11 April 2026

For further information on the band pieces, please contact Brendan Agnew
brendan.agnew.nz@gmail.com

For further information on the solo pieces, please contact Grant Langdon
gklklangdon@gmail.com

A link to the submission form is available at

BAND:

<https://forms.gle/PKiDC74g4XqT4j9a7>

SOLO:

<https://forms.gle/6bMHTi1gC7Zszua6A>



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6 June, 7pm
Oamaru
Opera House
Tickets available at
oamaruoperahouse.co.nz

NZ ARMY BAND **BRASS** **IN CONCERT**

7 June, 7pm
St. Mary's
Timaru
Tickets available
at Eventfinda

Mornings

with Andrew Clark
Weekdays 6am - 10am

Listen live on 89.7FM
rnz.co.nz/concert
or on the RNZ app



CONCERT

Introducing...

Andrew Clark is a Scottish broadcaster who now calls New Zealand home. He hosts the Mornings programme on RNZ Concert and is a big fan of brass, as well as a broad range of music. He has an association with brass music, having played in his school brass band in Scotland. Andrew will be at the National Championships, AKA the 2025 Festival of Brass, next month as the MC for An Evening of Melody and the B Grade band events.

How did your love of brass music start?

I got into the trumpet at the age of 12. I think one was handed around the class at school one day, and I thought I'd give it a try and loved its sound. I got a place in the school band and, in three years, played trumpet, trombone, then euphonium. My brass teacher basically wanted me to switch instruments where the demand for players was needed (I took it as a compliment!) when players left the band, as they left school. When he asked if I could play the tuba, that's when I put my foot down. I lived 20km from the school, and there was no way I was carrying a tuba in its case on the public bus! And then another 20km to Perth, where I'd play in the regional wind orchestra.

How far did you go with music?

At the age of 15, I completed grade 8 (Associated Board) in the euphonium, and it helped me get an over 90% pass rate in my music exam. I had started some composing (I was no Mozart!).

Sadly, music clashed with German on the school timetable, and my German teacher demanded I drop music so I could study languages at uni, which I went on to do, to qualify as an interpreter. My parents couldn't afford the cost of a euphonium and lessons (only free if you were doing exams), and I then became a poor student!

To this day, I wonder how my life would have changed if that choice hadn't been a thing.

I played Mozart's Horn Concerto No 4 for my practical music exam, and I wondered if I'd moved to something like the French Horn and could have taken to a stage with an orchestra one day! Or joined a band in places like here, where I could relive all the fun. (Any offers?!)

At least I went to university in Yorkshire – a hugely popular area for brass band music. So I'd get a chance to see them perform in small towns and villages across the county.

What did you enjoy about playing in a band?

Our school went to the national championships in Glasgow one year which was a real buzz. Being part of the bigger picture and seeing how good or bad the competition was, was so good. As well as the joy of playing music, the band was a great place to make friends.

The most memorable concert performance was when the school minibus wound its way up the glens of Scotland towards Aberfeldy, where the Mòd was held. That's a competitive festival of Scottish Gaelic language and culture. We won enough prize money for us to stop at one of Scotland's best fish and chip shops on the way home, so we all felt it was amazing how we earned enough money to pay for our dinner!

What do you love about brass music?

Its range. You can get the glorious brass sounds from Baroque masters like Bach and Handel. That's where I feel brass instruments are perfect for our listeners when they tune in for Mornings on RNZ Concert. Something uplifting. I had figured this out already, but I remember a Professor of Music at Yale University talking about this when I did a refresher with him about the history of classical music.

On the flipside, the mellowness is pretty special too. And that often comes from the brass bands. We often have brass band versions of classics like the Grand March from Aida or opera arias, and the sound



gives it a warmer feeling.

I'm also loving how brass music is reinventing itself. I recently interviewed Christchurch Symphony Orchestra trumpeter Cameron Pearce on RNZ Concert. He'd released an album called *Progression* with some of his colleagues at the CSO (calling themselves Symposium Brass) and the New York-based trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. We still have tracks from the album on the Mornings playlist. It doesn't fit in one particular music genre; it's just great to listen to (check out his album *Apricity*.)

How popular do you think brass music and brass bands are in New Zealand?

I get good feedback from listeners when I play brass music. RNZ Concert will be recording some of the performances at the National Championships in Christchurch, and I'll be playing a sample of them on the show the following week.

I do ticket giveaways on the Mornings programme regularly, and it was really interesting to see how popular the tickets were for a couple of concerts featuring the National Youth Brass Band in Christchurch and Ashburton. They were playing the soundtrack to *Wallace and Gromit*. Seeing how many people want to see brass bands in concert was very encouraging.

You can catch Andrew on RNZ Concert from 6.00-10.00am weekday mornings on radio or streaming at [rnz.co.nz/concert](https://www.rnz.co.nz/concert)



Maj Graham Hickman (Director of Music, NZAB), SSgt Kevin Hickman (Recipient IMMS 'Bugle'), Denis Spurdle (IMMS Representative) and Lt Col Tim Tuatini (Commanding Officer, NZAB).

The Terry Moloney Memorial Bugle

The International Military Music Society (IMMS), New Zealand Branch, established the Terry Moloney Memorial Bugle annual award in 2011.

WO2 Terry Moloney was the founding Bandmaster of the 1st New Zealand Infantry Regiment Band in 1957, and became affectionately known as the 'grandfather of the New Zealand Army Band'. Terry passed away in December 2010 at the age of 88 and gave his blessing to the creation of an annual award in his memory.

The criterion for the annual award is "For the New Zealand military band member who has made the greatest contribution to military music."

Previous recipients of the 'Bugle' are SqnLdr Graham Hanify (RNZAF Central Band, 2021), WO1 Graeme Bremner (NZ Army Band, 2012), WO Denis Spurdle (RNZAF Band, 2013), WO Shaun Jarrett (RNZ Navy Band, 2014), FltSgt Sandra Wheeler (RNZAF Ohakea, 2015), WO2 Dwayne Bloomfield (NZ Army Band, 2016), WO2 Phillip Johnston (NZ Army Band, 2017), SSgt Tristan Mitchell (NZ Army Band, 2018), Sgt Bill Rimmer (Band of the Royal Regiment of NZ Artillery, 2019) Sgt Rick Henderson (7th Battalion Band, 2020), POMus Seleni Sulusi (RNZ Navy Band, 2021), SSgt David Fiu (NZ Army Band, 2022), and SSgt Nick Johnson (NZ Army Band, 2023).

On 12 May 2025, the 2024 recipient, SSgt Kevin Hickman of the NZ Army Band, was presented with the 'Bugle' at a ceremony in the Bandroom at Burnham Military Camp by IMMS representative Denis Spurdle and the NZ Army Band's Commanding Officer, Lt Col Tim Tuatini.

The citation read:

D134760 Staff Sergeant Kevin Hickman LTCL is a fifth-generation New Zealand military musician. He started his musical journey as a ten-year-old with Feilding Municipal Brass. After stints in Wanganui Brass under the baton of Kevin Jarrett and Hillingdon Band in London under Phillip Sparke, Kevin joined Woolston Brass in Christchurch as principal cornet, a position he held for 19 years.

Kevin is an accomplished cornet/trumpet/flugelhorn performer and has won fourteen national titles, including the coveted New Zealand and Australian Champion of Champions. At the time of his nomination, he was the current New Zealand Open Flugel Champion, the Australian Open Cornet Champion and the Australian Champion of Champions. Kevin has been selected as a musician for eight New Zealand National Bands. He also conducted the civilian band Woolston Concert Brass and led them to success, winning the 2021 New Zealand Brass Band "C Grade" Championships.

Kevin enlisted in the New Zealand Army Band as a Musician in June 2010. Since enlistment, he has held the positions of Cornet Section Leader, Communications Cell Manager, Deputy Drum Major and Deputy Bandmaster. In November 2021, Kevin was posted as Drum Major of the New Zealand Army Band.

As Drum Major of the New Zealand Army Band, Kevin's first marching display task was to design, choreograph, train and lead the unit's marching display at the 2022 Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the world's premier military tattoo, with a live audience

of 220,000 and a social media/television footprint of over one billion.

The technical difficulties in designing and training a marching display cannot be overstated, requiring spatial awareness of each musician's individual choreography and the interrelation of all movements. Kevin rose to the challenge with dedication and significant time and effort devoted after hours. He designed a unique, innovative marching display with drama, theatre and humour. He efficiently trained the unit with attention to detail and persistent effort, and led the performances throughout an arduous month-long deployment. His efforts were rewarded with the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo's highest award, the Pooley Sword, awarded to "the act that has made the greatest contribution to the Tattoo as chosen by fellow cast performers".

Since then, Kevin has led the New Zealand Army Band at many domestic and international parades and performances, including the 2023 Basel International Tattoo and the 2024 Avenches International Tattoo in Switzerland. Over his career, Kevin has deployed internationally on nineteen occasions.

As a manager, he maintains a calm demeanour and has earned the respect of his troops, the admiration of his superiors, and the acclamation of civilian audiences.

The diligence, enthusiasm, dedication and professional expertise Kevin has displayed throughout his military career are worthy of formal recognition with the presentation of the International Military Music Society's Terry Moloney Memorial Bugle.

Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast Contest

The Nelson Marlborough West Coast Band Association held its contest in Nelson on 17 and 18 May. The adjudicators were Mark Carter from Wellington and Cameron James from Christchurch.

| Traditional Contest | Hymn | March | OC | Agg |
|----------------------------|------|-------|----|-----|
| 1 NBS Nelson City Brass | 92 | 90 | 93 | 275 |
| 2 Westport Municipal | 82 | 82 | 83 | 247 |
| 3 Motueka District Brass | 79 | 84 | 80 | 243 |
| 4 Greymouth Municipal Band | 75 | 78 | 75 | 228 |

Charlie Ross Trophy – (Aggregate)– NBS Nelson City Brass

Abrahams Beaumont Cup (Champion A/B Grade Band) – NBS Nelson City Brass

Gordon Russell Memorial Cup – (Champion C/D Grade Band) – Westport Municipal Brass

FESTIVAL OF BRASS – Entertainment Contest

Music Judges Mark Carter and Cameron James. Entertainment Adjudicator Rachel Boyack, MP for Nelson.

| | Music | Ent | Agg |
|----------------------------|-------|-----|-----|
| 1 NBS Nelson City Brass | 65 | 29 | 94 |
| 2= Westport Municipal | 47 | 25 | 72 |
| 2= Motueka District Brass | 50 | 22 | 72 |
| 4 Greymouth Municipal Band | 41 | 21 | 62 |

Nicholas Family Cup (Aggregate): NBS Nelson City Brass

Best Soloist: Mike Ford, NBS Nelson City Brass

Solo and Ensemble Events

Premier Air Varie

- 1 Ross Gerritsen NBS Nelson City Brass
- 2 Mike Ford NBS Nelson City Brass
- 3 Kay MacKenzie NBS Nelson City Brass

Premier Slow Melody

- 1 Kay MacKenzie NBS Nelson City Brass
- 2 Mike Ford NBS Nelson City Brass
- 3 Ross Gerritsen NBS Nelson City Brass

55+ Air Varie

- 1 Robin Randall Marlborough District Brass
- 2 Tala Natapu Marlborough District Brass

55+ Slow Melody

- 1 Robin Randall Marlborough District Brass
- 2 Tala Natapu Marlborough District Brass
- 3 Kevin Moseley Marlborough District Brass

Intermediate Air Varie

- 1 Logan Ready Marlborough District Brass

Intermediate Slow Melody

- 1 Rachel Roxburgh Greymouth Municipal Band
- 2 George Salt NBS Nelson City Brass
- 3 Robin Ross Greymouth Municipal Band

Under 19 Air Varie

- 1 Niko Russell Marlborough District Brass
- 2 Janet Luka Marlborough District Brass
- 3 Ariel Rofe Marlborough District Brass

Under 19 Slow Melody

- 1 Ariel Rofe Marlborough District Brass
- 2 Janet Luka Marlborough District Brass
- 3 Luke Riley Marlborough District Brass

Under 15 Air Varie

- 1 Spencer Keoghan Westport Municipal Band
- 2 Benjamin Corban Marlborough District Brass

Under 15 Slow Melody

- 1 Spencer Keoghan Westport Municipal Band
- 2= Oliver Diamond NBS Nelson City Brass
- 2= Finbar Hanson NBS Nelson City Brass

Open Duet

- 1 Mike Ford and Ross Gerritsen NBS Nelson City Brass
- 2 Robin Randall and Tala Natapu Marlborough District Brass
- 3 Spencer and Rebecca Keoghan Westport Municipal Band

Open Ensemble

- 1 NBS Nelson City Brass

Junior Ensemble

- 1 Marlborough District Brass (No2)





Under-19 Ensemble winners, Auckland City Youth, with judge Tyme Marsters.

Auckland Bands Association Contest

The Auckland Bands' Association Solo and Ensemble contest was held at King's College on Sunday, 25 May. The adjudicators were Tyme Marsters and Natalie Paine.

Special thanks to Contest Manager Kathy McDonald and her assistants Peter Whyte, Laine Ratsep, Owen Melhuish, Ane Filimoehala, John Sullivan and Mark Close.

Under 11 years solo

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Mason Ding | Auckland City Youth |
| 2 Ryan Large | Waitakere Auckland Youth |
| 3 Luke Wakefield | Auckland City Youth |

Slow Melody Under 13 Years

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Jini Varekamp | Auckland City Youth |
| 2 Arthur Jin | Auckland City Youth |
| 3 Edwin Swainson | Waitakere Auckland Youth |

Not Slow Melody Under 13 Years

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Celine Wu | North Shore Youth Brass |
| 2 Jimi Varekamp | Auckland City Brass |
| 3 Quinton Koit | North Shore Youth Brass |

Restricted U16 yrs

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Fabian Fabricus | Rutherford College |
| 2 Cadie McDonald | North Shore Academy |

Slow Melody Under 16 Years

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Celine Wu | North Shore Academy |
| 2 Sophie Wood | North Shore Academy |
| 3 Dante Nugroho | Auckland City Youth |

Not Slow Melody Under 16 Years

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Dante Nugroho | Auckland City Youth |
| 2 Celine Wu | North Shore Academy |
| 3 Callum Shuker-Brown | North Shore Academy |

Slow Melody Under 19 Years

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Matt Donaldson | North Shore Brass |
| 2 Emily Sullivan | North Shore Brass |
| 3 Dimitrios Koulianos | North Shores Brass |

Not Slow Melody under 19 Years

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Emily Sullivan | North Shore Brass |
| 2 Dimitrios Koulianos | North Shore Brass |
| 3 Matt Donaldson | North Shore Brass |

Slow Melody Any Age

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Francisco Ruiz Henao | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| 2 Sang Hyn Kim | Auckland City Brass |
| 3 Kurt McDonald | Ascot Park Hotel Invercargill Brass |

Not Slow Melody Any Age

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 John Sullivan | North Shore Brass |
|-----------------|-------------------|

2 Francisco Ruiz Henao

Waitakere Auckland Brass
Auckland Brass

3 Kento Oyamada

Slow Melody Championship

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Steven Booth | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| 2 Semisi Ahoatu | North Shore Brass |
| 3 Francisco Ruiz Henao | Waitakere Auckland Brass |

Not Slow Melody Championship

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Semisi Ahoatu | North Shore Brass |
| 2 Andrew Large | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| 3 Francisco Ruiz Henao | Waitakere Auckland Brass |

Veterans

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Steven Booth | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| 2 Pete Adams | Auckland City Brass |
| 3 Kerry Wood | Eastern Bay of Plenty Brass |

Duet Under 16 Years

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Arthur Jin/John Ula | Auckland City Youth |
| Lavinia Taunga/Sunia Taunga | Waitakere Auckland Youth |
| Rosie Gladding/Alison Want | North Shore Academy |

Duet Under 19 Years

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Callum Keer Keer/Alison Lee Jones | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| Bryan Cooper/Devon Fenwick-Rose | North Shore Academy |

Duet over 19 Years

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Matt Donaldson/Mark Close | North Shore Brass |
| 2 Steven Booth/Grant Langdon | Waitakere Auckland Brass |
| 3 Tate & Ben Harrington | Waitakere Auckland Brass |

Trio - Under 19 Years

- | |
|-----------------------------|
| 1 Auckland City Youth |
| 2 North Shore Academy |
| 3= Auckland City Youth |
| 3= Waitakere Auckland Youth |

Quartet - Under 19 Years

- | |
|-----------------------|
| 1 Auckland City Youth |
| 2 Auckland City Youth |
| 3 North Shore Academy |

Ensemble - Under 19 years

- | |
|----------------------------|
| 1 Auckland City Youth |
| 2 Waitakere Auckland Youth |
| 3 Auckland City Youth |

Ensemble ver 19 years

- | |
|----------------------------|
| 1 Waitakere Auckland Brass |
|----------------------------|

Parent/Child/Family Group

- | |
|--------------------------|
| 1 Donaldson-Close Family |
|--------------------------|



Semisi Ahoatu, winner of the Not Slow Melody Championship.



Auckland Amalgamation

It's been no secret that City of Sails Brass (CoS) and Auckland City Brass (ACB) have been chatting for some time about an amalgamation. Since the Auckland Anniversary Day floods of 2023, when ACB lost their bandroom, it has rehearsed at the CoS bandroom (formerly home to Continental Airlines Auckland Brass and Dalewool Auckland Brass). Since CoS had not had an active band for some time, and ACB had no home, an amalgamation was a sensible solution.

However, it is not just an amalgamation of two bands, but four!

Back in the day, Onehunga Citizens' Band, formed in 1903, Waitemata Watersiders' Silver Band (1919), Mt Eden Boys' Band (1929), and Balmoral Boys' Band (1935) were vibrant parts of their respective communities. Over time, Onehunga and Waitemata combined to form Onehunga-Waitemata Silver, which then morphed into the Continental-Dalewool dynasty. On the other side of the ledger, Mt Eden and Balmoral became Mt Roskill Brass, which became Auckland City Brass in the mid-90s.

On Saturday, 10 March, many former Continental, Dalewool and CoS members, along with former and current members of ACB came to the bandroom to celebrate the amalgamation.

After words of welcome from CoS Life Member and co-President Jamie Ford, the assembled band commenced proceedings with a rendition of the march, *Sparkling Waitemata*. Commissioned by the Waitemata Silver Band and long-buried in the vaults, this march was composed by well-known British composer Denis Wright and dedicated to HJ Kelliher (band patron and boss of Dominion Breweries at the time). The march was named after the harbour, the band and a certain brew which went by the same name! According to well-placed sources, the Patron generously donated a crate of said beer to the band after each rehearsal! For those who will be there, you will hear the band perform *Sparkling Waitemata* at the Street March in Christchurch in July.

The band was delighted to welcome Brent Large to conduct an old favourite *'Mid all the Traffic*. Brent was the principal horn of Continental for many years during their heyday and also conducted Auckland City to two B-Grade Championships. He typifies many personnel links between the two bands; others include Lloyd Thorne, who led both bands to national contest victories during the '50s and '60s, and Vaughan McDonald, who started in Balmoral Boys' Band, went on to become Principal Cornet of Waitemata/Continental at the age of 17, and then won the A-Grade as conductor in 1989 and 1991.

Several former band members shared memories of the "old days". It

was particularly heart-warming to hear from Kel Sullivan (father of BBANZ President, John Sullivan), one of only two surviving members from the combined band's first-ever A Grade win in 1957.

Previously mentioned stalwart, Vaughan McDonald, shared many memories, which were well-received.

In addition to Jamie, thanks are due to Jennifer Carey, and Jan Ward and to Martyn Spencer for keeping CoS afloat during some tough years. And in more recent months, thanks are due to Co-President Ella Tunncliffe-Glass for her stellar work in getting the amalgamation over the line.

All who attended were very happy to drink a toast to the next exciting chapter in this history!!!

Mark Close - Auckland City Brass MD and former member of Dalewool Auckland Brass

Free workshops

Who wouldn't want to attend a free workshop run by David Bremner, principal trombone of the NZSO and MD of Wellington Brass, New Zealand's champion band?

David is passionate about brass banding and developing players and conductors. He has volunteered to lead workshops in the towns and cities that the NZSO or its brass ensemble are performing in this year.

Here are the dates for the first three workshops. Keep an eye out for further events later in the year.

Thursday 5 June: 5.00pm to 6.00pm at the Marlborough Bandroom, Blenheim.

Tuesday 10 June: 4.30pm to 5.30pm at the Due Drop Centre, 770 Great South Road, Manukau.

Thursday 12 June: 5.30pm to 6.30pm at the Salvation Army Centre, 3-11 Aubrey Street, Whangarei.

Everyone is welcome. There is no cost or registration - just turn up and bring your banding friends.

Our grateful thanks to the NZSO for their support.

CDBBA Contest

The Central Districts Brass Band Association's solo and party contest was held in Whanganui on Sunday, 11 May. The adjudicators were Lachlan Spence, Kodi Rasmussen, Daniel Dalglish, Hamish Jellyman and David Coleman.

Junior Novice Solo

- 1 Giovanni Marengo New Plymouth JAY Band

Under 13 Slow Melody

- 1 Indiana Waugh Hawera Brass
- 2 Giovanni Makau Brass Whanganui Concert Band
- 3 Lydia Holdaway Palmerston North Brass

Under 13 Air Varie

- 1 Indiana Waugh Hawera Brass
- 2 Lydia Holdaway Palmerston North Brass
- 3 Mac Waugh Hawera Brass

Under 16 Slow Melody

- 1 Callum Morgan Brass Whanganui
- 2 Moata Lievo-Benegas Brass Whanganui Concert Band
- 3 Arne Lievo Benegas Brass Whanganui Concert Band

Under 16 Air Varie

- 1 Moata Lievo-Benegas Brass Whanganui Concert Band
- 2 James Peng New Plymouth JAY Band
- 3 Mafa Fruean New Plymouth JAY Band

Under 19 Slow Melody

- 1 Delavan Domney-Mackey Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass
- 2 Arabella Waugh Hawera Brass
- 3 Tyler Williams Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass

Under 19 Air Varie

- 1 Arabella Waugh Hawera Brass
- 2 Delavan Domney-Mackey Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass
- 3 Bryn Morgan Brass Whanganui

Junior Percussion Solo

- 1 Lucy Morgan Brass Whanganui
- 2 Quin Wen Brass Whanganui

Open Slow Melody

- 1 Ben Thompson Brass Whanganui
- 2 Ray Farrow Brass Whanganui
- 3 Jonathon Greenwell Brass Whanganui

Open Air Varie

- 1 David Miller Levn & Districts Brass
- 2 Wesley Richards Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass
- 3 Rachael Richmond Brass Whanganui Concert Band

Championship Solo

- 1 Tahu Pikimaui Brass Whanganui
- 2 Keenan Buchanan Palmerston North Brass
- 3 Hamish Jellyman Brass Whanganui

Open Duet

- 1 Brass Whanganui

Junior Duet

- 1 Palmerston North Brass
- 2 Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass
- 3= Hawera Brass
- 3= Hawera Brass

Junior Small Ensemble

- 1 Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass

Junior Large Ensemble

- 1 Brass Whanganui No 2
- 2 Devon Hotel New Plymouth Brass
- 3= Brass Whanganui No 2
- 3= Hawera Brass



Hey There, Young Musicians

It's that time of year again to plan your summer holidays – by which we mean it is time to apply for the 2026 National Youth Brass Band.

All the information you will need can be found [via this link](#):

Please submit a completed application form, an audition with all the required material, and a letter of recommendation from a Musical Director by **Saturday 26 July 2025**. The selection panel meets in Wellington on 2 and 3 August to listen to the auditions and select the band. The good news is that you have almost three months to get everything together, so don't leave it to the last minute.

If there are any problems accessing the form or questions about the audition/application process, please contact Emily Richards, band manager, at nybb2026@gmail.com or 021 607 483.

2027 National Championship

With the announcement from the Ministry of Education of the term dates for 2027, we can confirm the 2027 contest dates are from **Wednesday 7 to Sunday 11 July** and held in Invercargill. See you there.



2028 National Championships

Applications are called for from organisations wishing to host the 2028 National Championships in the upper half of the North Island. Please contact Helen at the **BBANZ Office** to discuss your application and request an application form. Applications close on Saturday, 31 August 2025.



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The New Zealand Veterans Band

The New Zealand Veterans Band was formed in response to an official invitation from the Royal Passchendaele Society to support their 2012 Anzac Day services. The band was based at Ypres (Belgium) and performed at the dawn service at Polygon Wood, the morning service at Messines and the official parade and service at the Menin Gate. In addition to these Anzac Day commitments, the band performed public concerts at LeQuesnoy (Northern France) and the famous Zonnebeke Church.

While that initial tour had been planned as a "one-off" event, it proved so successful and enjoyable that the band decided to get together every couple of years. During each tour, a meeting is held to discuss and decide the next destination.

Since that first trip to Belgium, the band has embarked on highly successful tours of the Queensland Sunshine Coast and hinterland in 2013, 2015 and 2023, the Coromandel Peninsula in 2016 and Central Otago in 2019 and 2021. The band also returned to Belgium in 2017 to commemorate the 100th

Anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, a hugely significant event in our military history.

The New Zealand Veterans Band is a 25-strong brass band comprising former New Zealand Defence Force regular and territorial force musicians. Although most of them no longer play professionally, they are all still actively involved in music and brass banding, and between them, they boast over 1,500 years of playing their craft. They have an average of 23 years of service and friendships that go back decades, including their partners. Between them, members have won numerous national solo and ensemble events and featured in many national bands and orchestras over a 70-year period.

The band's most recent tour was based in Orewa last April, during which they supported the Hibiscus Coast Community RSA Anzac Services, followed by a rousing concert inside the club rooms. Four additional concerts were included during the week, highlighted by a sellout performance

at the wonderful Bruce Mason Theatre in Takapuna.

At the band's final dinner, they were entertained by Peter Harbidge and his trio. Pete's Trio, "No Direction", has entertained audiences over many years, with any funds raised given to various charities. For the Veterans Band event, Pete has asked that any funds we provided to his band be given to support the National Youth Band. We are, of course, very happy to support the youth of our band movement in this way, with many of our Veterans Band members having been members of National Youth Bands in the past. Coincidentally, a handful of the band members were in the same National Youth Band with Pete in the 1970s, while a couple of the oldest members were in the 1959 National Youth Band!

Planning has commenced for the band's next tour in 2027, which will see them again back at the Menin Gate in Ypres (Belgium), where it all began.

Tim McDavitt, founding member.



The 1985 National Band

Extracts from *Through Bolts & Bars* by Kevin Dell.

The Tour

The first part was an approximately week-long tour of the Netherlands. Some concerts had been given in the Netherlands prior to the World Music Contest, one of which was at Scheveningen, a beach town in The Hague. Once, it had been one of Europe's most distinguished seaside resorts. It no longer occupied that prestigious position, but was nevertheless an interesting first-time visit for the band. Another first-time visit was to the island of Schiermonnikoog, one of the West Frisian Islands, which the band accessed by ferry.

Most of the tour of the Netherlands was arranged by Bill van Dam, a valued supporter of the band. His arrangements were, as expected, excellent. They were often varied, some including marching engagements, one of which necessitated the band perform its display march in a carpark, which Drum Major Stephen Leader handled superbly. The performance in Rijnsburg coincided with a flower parade.

That part of the tour concluded with a concert in Kevelaer, Germany, which the 1978 National Band also visited.

Then, it was on to the second part of the tour, which was in France. This was the first time a national band had been to France. It was memorable for many reasons, one of which was the long distances travelled, including an overnight journey, following a concert, from Gien to La Rochelle, where we arrived around 5.00am. The performance that day involved another ferry ride, this time to La Flotte on the Île de Ré, where the band took part in a parade to celebrate one of the many battles that have taken place on the island.

Following the late-night travel and during some free time prior to our marching performance, some members of the band had a beer or two. This dismayed the musical director who said he "saw the band disintegrating before his eyes." However, all was well, and the band marched and played as normal.

The concert in Dunkirk almost did not happen. It was preceded by a street march on the road alongside the beach. When that concluded, there was no one to lead the band to the theatre. The inevitable happened – the band got lost. It was 10.00pm before the band arrived at the theatre. The full house was still waiting, and a full concert was given.

Nominate Your Best

To paraphrase, behind every good band is a team of people doing great work.

Each year, the National Management Committee seeks nominations from bands and District Associations for the Administrator and Accompanist of the Year. This annual award aims to acknowledge the people whose outstanding work supports our brass band community.

The Administrator of the Year and Accompanist of the Year awards will be announced, and the trophies will be presented, at the National Contest. Most years, the award winners have no idea they have been nominated and often must be coerced under some pretence to attend the presentation. Bands that have gone to great trouble to keep it a secret are delighted to see the surprise on their nominee's face when the award is announced.

Please send your nomination to Brass Band Association of New Zealand, 159 Gayhurst Road, Dallington, Christchurch 8061, or to bbanzeo@gmail.com

Nominations close: Friday, 6 June 2025

The band then flew to Glasgow for the third part of the post-Kerkrade tour. Former (National) bandsman Bob Mulholland (1967 and 1970) provided huge support, organising concerts at Fleetwood and Buxton in England, and providing logistical support for the whole tour. The highlight for the band was a concert in Central Hall, Westminster, where Harry Mortimer was invited by Ken Smith Junior to conduct the band. Mortimer paid the band one of the highest compliments of the tour when he compared it to Foden's Band in their heyday.

Then for the fourth part, it was home to concerts in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Media interest in New Zealand and overseas was less than in the past, perhaps reflecting changes in the entertainment tastes of the public. Despite that, reviews in 1985 were generally glowing. Tom Brown of the *Christchurch Star*, reviewing the band's final concert, said, "A spontaneous standing ovation ... was a fitting climax ... [to] the finest brass band concert I have heard in the Town Hall". Stephen Simwell, after hearing the concert in Buxton, commented in the *British Bandsman* on the technical brilliance of the band in Dvořák's *Carnival Overture* and the breathtaking melodic beauty in Philip Sparke's *Aotearoa*. He said the memory of the band's artistry and musicality would remain.

The band travelled fifty thousand kilometres: forty thousand by air and ten thousand by coach. From the time it arrived in the Netherlands, it gave twenty-nine performances and competed in three contests in thirty-three days.

A reunion for the players, administrators and family members of the 1985 National Band is planned for Sunday, 6 July in Christchurch. Contact Errol Moore at muso1952@gmail.com if you are interested in attending.



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BAND WARS

May the Fourth Be With You



Wellington City Concert Band.
Photo credit to Dais Hayashi.

© 2025 Buzzing Brass Band

Review: 4 May, 2025, by John Smith

It's not every day you find yourself in a concert hall cheering for a swarm of bees, laughing at bad body odour jokes, and watching a brass band conductor lose a lightsaber duel, all in one night. But *Band Wars: May the Fourth Be With You* delivered all that and more in a witty, musically rich, and visually spectacular performance that celebrated both Star Wars and the art of community banding.

Presented by Buzzing Brass Wellington and the Wellington City Concert Band, this two-act production transformed Massey University's Great Hall into a band room far, far away. The massive wrap-around LED screen brought desert planets, space battles, and hive-shaped superweapons vividly to life, fully immersing the audience in the galactic spectacle. Coupled with dramatic lighting and smoke effects, the production value was nothing short of outstanding, all delivered with a delightfully distinctive community band twist.

Act One – Buzzing Brass: The Forte Awakens

We began on the sand-swept planet Tambourine, where the bass-blasting warlord Tuba from the Hutt (Mika Hayashi) had claimed the Pulse Sabre, a mystical baton

of rhythmic power. Darth Mouseious, the delightfully over-the-top villain played by Tom Baker, lurked in the shadows, plotting to copyright all entertainment in the galaxy.

Enter bounty hunter Dim Djaritone (Daniel Dalglish), whose mission is derailed by Tuba from the Hutt's tuba solo (Jabba the Hutt's theme). Salvation arrives in the form of Rey Mi Fa (Iris Percy-Boulcott), a young Jedi cornetist guided by the embodiment of "The Force," played to great comic effect by Jack Bewley in a green morph suit. Rey finds the Sabre and brings it to Jedi Master Buzz Lightyear (Buzzing Brass Musical Director Buzz Newton) to deliver it safely into the hands of the Brass Band Association of New Zealand Executive Committee, a laugh-out-loud in-joke for banders everywhere, just in time for a dramatic ambush by Darth Mouseious.

Their slow-motion duel was impressive and ridiculous, culminating in Buzz losing his hand, a loving parody of the famous "I am your father" scene. Mouseious claimed the Sabre, and the band, now under Sith control, was forced to play *The Imperial March*.

Act Two – WCCB: Revenge of the Synth

Wellington City Concert Band took the stage, led by Jedi Master O-brasso My'kashton

(Mike Ashton), to fight back. But the enemy had grown stronger. Mouseious was now aided by his new apprentice, Darth JuNo Mercy, the Dark Lord of the Synth-esiser. Their superweapon? A hive-shaped device powered by the Sabre, designed to copyright every performance in the galaxy.

Highlights included a swingin' Cantable Milk Bar scene with a blue milk-fueled jazz mash-up of *Cantina Band* and *Sing Sing Sing* and a thrilling musical journey to stop the superweapon. Just when all hope seemed lost, a swarm of buzzy bees arrived along with Buzzing Brass to turn the tide. In a dramatic twist, the Dark Lord of the Synth was revealed to be Buzz Lightyear himself, redeemed and ready to get his revenge on Darth Mouseious.

The finale was a brilliant flourish of music, theatre, and unity, with the combined bands striking down Mouseious in a glorious hat trick of B-flat major chords.

Verdict: With sharp narration from Kate Lineham and unforgettable performances from both bands, *Band Wars* was a joyful triumph of humour, harmony, and imagination. May the fourth be with them, always.

Tom Baker as Darth Mouseious





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