

Lions Beginner Band Musical Directors Report for the AGM October 2011

Evolution has been in the air over the past few months with the Beginner Band. After a successful debut at the National Finals the band has moved on no less than 12 players to the Junior Band whilst welcoming in seven new players as well. On top of that, we have had a slight restructure and change of personnel working with the band too. Despite this, I believe the band is nicely placed to progress even further in the near future.

I felt extremely privileged to be asked to conduct the band during their debut performance at the aforementioned National Finals. The thought of the band entering in its own right would have seemed rather far-fetched a few years ago, but it was a perfectly timed opportunity for the band to enter in 2011. The performance the band put in and the feedback the adjudicators gave us was a credit to the hard work the band put in, as well as testament to the exceptional work that Hayley, Andrew and Matthew put in with the children during the run-up to the contest. It is also only right to thank Katie Raisbeck and Huw Williams for stepping in to assist by playing on the day and helping with percussion tuition respectively. We are already looking forward to returning in 2012, in what is a slightly re-organised Training Band section.

The 21st anniversary celebration was a fine chance for the band to showcase their talents. I was pleased with the performance given during the evening and it was pleasing to see that the high level of performance given in Manchester was maintained during that concert.

I mentioned a change of personnel over recent months. We were saddened to lose both Andrew Felton and Matthew Darlington recently. Both Andrew and Matthew were instrumental in the Nationals performance and their importance to the children in the band was highlighted by the upset you could see in the children's faces when they found out about it. Both will be missed greatly, and we must thank them both and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

It was pleasing to be able to welcome both Derek Gardner and Ashley Taylor to join the team with myself and Hayley. Derek transfers his wealth of experience to the Beginners from the Juniors and he is already making a massive impact on his students within the band. Ashley meanwhile has joined us fresh from leaving the Youth Band. His versatility and enthusiasm has, like Derek, already impacted greatly on the band. Finally, and by no means least, a huge thank you must go to Hayley. Calmness personified, nothing is too much to ask of her and it is obvious to see how much every child in the band adores her.

Looking ahead, having whetted our appetites at Manchester, we shall be returning in late April 2012. There are also initial plans in place to enter the band into a competition during March as well. With yet more concert opportunities forthcoming in 2012 too - due to the encouragement our committee are giving to our supporting Lions clubs to invite all three bands to

perform – then the next twelve months looks to be just as exciting as the last year.

I wish to thank you all for the support you give to the Beginner Band team. It is a busy life for everyone, and the effort you put in to transport your children to rehearsals, workshops and concerts is appreciated. Without you, I would be conducting an empty room! Thank you for your continued support of what we do.

Thanks to Nigel, Ian, Tom and Katie. Nigel will help in any way possible and I know the children love it when he conducts them at workshops – and having someone of Nigel's vast experience for these events is brilliant. Ian, Tom and Katie take our players for the Junior's and it is testament to their skills that the children settle and feel at home right away in the Junior environment.

Finally, I would like to thank Jane and the committee. It is hard to put into words what they do for this band. Without them there would be no Lions Youth Organisation. They deserve just as much credit as the bands receive when on stage, and I only hope that we are able to repay them in some way by progressing and putting in performances that make them proud of the organisation.

Chris Thompson
Musical Director, Lions Beginner Band