

DCB Weekly

Issue 7

Saturday 2nd May 2020



DUNBARTONSHIRE
CONCERT
BAND

Welcome to the seventh edition of the DCB newsletter. As always, we would love to receive your contributions, so why not send us something that you'd like to share with the rest of the band? We'd be delighted to hear from you!

Welcome from the Chair

Good morning all, I hope you are all still enjoying the newsletter. Check it out and see what interesting things we have for you this week.

One thing that has really changed over the last seven weeks is how creative we have become to find alternative ways to play music together and stay connected to family, friends, and colleagues. I have certainly had great fun being able to see and play music with friends in the band. So, this week I thought it would be good to connect with more of you and see how you are, how you have been coping and what you have been doing to keep busy. It is amazing how easy it actually is, so take the plunge, give it a go today and I hope to see you there!

Stay safe, stay well.



Robert's section follows overleaf...

Musical Director's update

Good morning everyone,

I do hope that you had some fun and hopefully good surprises if you recorded yourself playing over the past week. If you did and enjoyed the long notes, thinking about tone, then why don't you try recording things we've been focusing on over the last months.

Intervals

Double tonguing

Solo pieces/band excerpts.

High register.....

Let's concentrate on this for a week.

1. Try starting with the breathing exercises we've done for years at DCB
2. Choose a scale (it's the easiest suggestion for me as there are such a range of instruments)
3. As an example A major. Play slowly and feel and hear where things begin to become tricky (if they don't then choose a higher scale).
4. 'Building strength'

Play A - B (slowly) short rest

Play B - C# short rest

Play C# - D short rest

Etc. etc.....as you ascend aim to keep relaxed and concentrate on keeping the airflow free and moving.

When you reach your own limit then practice it until it is no longer your limit. This may take many days of playing but remember, rest is important, so only attempt the next phrase three times and then stop and do something else.

Think long term and keep building positives, sing it, breath it, PLAY it!

Let me know how you get on.

Good luck

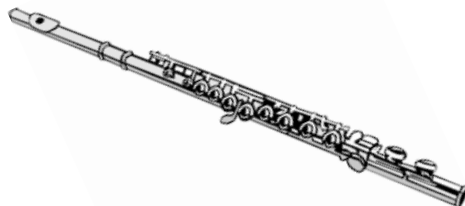
Robert

PS - I really enjoyed the horn section playing last week and loved the choice of repertoire. Who's next?

DCB Weekly says turn to page 5 to find out!

Meet the band

This week, we hear from bassoonist **John**, and discover that the bassoon isn't his only musical love.



A flute-playing bassoonist

Most of you will know me as a bassoon player but I also play the flute with the Lanarkshire Caecilian Orchestra (LCO). Bassoon is still my first love, but flute playing is a close second, so I listen to our DCB flute section with great interest and admiration, a talented bunch!

I started playing about 15 years ago when, towards the end of my tenure in my last U.S. church, our choir director invited the local professor of flute to come and play a special piece. Of course, I'd heard the flute played before, but I'd never heard the flute played quite so *well* as it was at church that day. I was mesmerised and decided on the spot that I must learn to play and not long afterwards I asked her if she could teach me. Thankfully, my parents, who never threw anything away, had kept my sister's beginner flute in their closet for the last 20 years and were only too happy to see it rescued from oblivion. I had it serviced and was soon up and running.

After that musical epiphany in church, I began what became an 18-month period of unemployment during which my flute was a constant companion and a tether for my sanity. I played every day and, as one does, got just a little bit better with every note.

It was also during this period that my wife and I decided to take our six children on a camping journey that ended up covering over 11,000 miles and 23 states across the U.S. We swam in both oceans and saw sights most Americans have never imagined. Throughout the 14 weeks we were away, I never stopped practicing and each night in the campgrounds, after dinner, I would pull out my flute for an hour and practice my scales and exercises. As many have recently discovered, making music outside is a special joy!

Naturally, I brought my (new) flute with me when we moved to Scotland and joined the LCO in 2018 when two members of the group were talking at church one day and said, "Oh, we really need someone who plays the flute, *badly*." I said, "I know just the guy!"

Thank you John for taking the time to tell us about your flute playing journey. Don't forget that John now has his own YouTube channel where you can find his vlogs.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu3UrY4nWf_7Z00c_6lIEjw?view

If anyone would like to contribute something for a future newsletter, get in touch via the usual email address - dunbartonshireconcertband@gmail.com. We would be delighted to hear from you!

Lost in Lockdown - postscript

Last week, we heard from David Welsh, who told us how he's been keeping very busy over the past few weeks. Below is a postscript to David's article.

I always enjoy reading through the weekly newsletter with so many interesting items and thoughtful articles. And I always marvel at the effort and skill of those who provide them for us on a weekly basis. All the more praiseworthy when you consider that some of these people are holding down important jobs and have to wrestle with the problems of time management.

And so when last week's edition arrived I settled down to enjoy the read. Imagine my shock and horror when I noticed a couple of spelling mistakes in my article! I read it a second time but the mistakes were still there. I checked my original copy I realised that the article must have been 'edited' in some way, a fact which was later confirmed with a phone-call. And it all revolved round the spelling of two words associated with playing music on a daily basis and this reminded me of the first time I learned of this problem, just over 63 years ago, which is worth a mention today.

About five months after joining the army I finally arrived in Dortmund, West Germany, to join the Royal Artillery Portsmouth Band and was quickly involved in the daily routine of rehearsals etc. I wrote a number of letters to friends and family describing the set-up and received a very speedy reply from my father. I always looked forward to receiving a letter from my dad, they were warm and friendly, informative and encouraging, full of stories of the local gig scene and often containing useful tips and advice on trombone playing. But this one was different and started with the heading, "My dear fellow" which was usually a sign of something ominous to come, often in the form of heavy sarcasm. The letter read something like this.

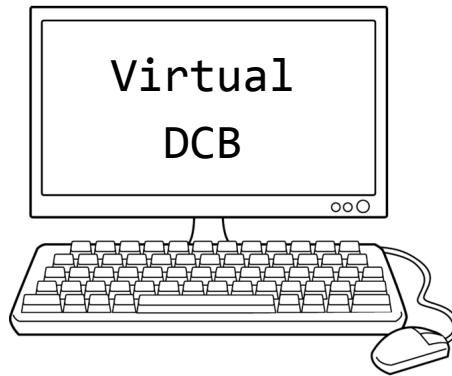
My dear fellow

Since you are likely to be involved in music for some time in the future I would be obliged if you learned that there are two words – practice, spelt with a 'c', which is a noun, and practise, spelt with an 's' which is a verb. Kindly remember this!

Your father

And I have!

DCB Weekly note - the culprit (Susan) has already apologised profusely to David for her editing faux pas, and has learned that her usual aide-memoire of 'practising' an instrument doesn't work in all cases!



This week, **Monika** has taken on the virtual playing challenge, which she describes as a 'one smartphone own backing track' short recording. The recording features three clarinet parts, and is an excerpt from a piece called Tico Tico by Zequinha Abreu. Monika put this together after hearing the virtual recording from the horn section of the band, which was featured in last week's newsletter.

Monika says:

"We had just listened to the great recording of the French horn quartet on Zoom, which really motivated me to practise that night. Off I went to do Robert's breathing exercises and perhaps even record the long note challenge he set us.

This is what I ended up with.

I promise I'll try the long notes again sometime soon..."

You can hear Monika's fantastic performance by heading to the [audio track](#) on the DCB website.



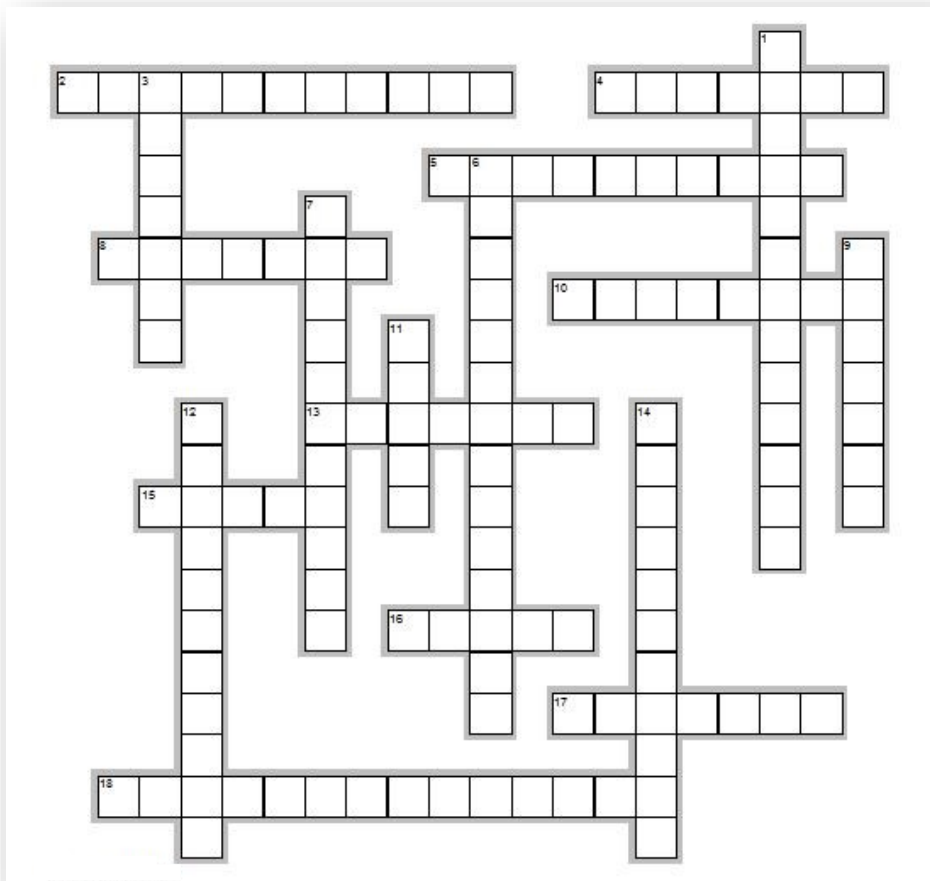
Thanks Monika for sharing this with us. It just goes to show that there's no need for fancy computer equipment to make your own multiple part recording!

If you'd like to put together a recording, either on your own or with others in the band, we would be delighted to receive it. Let us know what you've come up with by emailing dunbartonshireconcertband@gmail.com.

Saturday quiz

Alan Cooper's previous crossword proved to be very popular, so he's kindly put together another one. If you'd like to have a go, submit your solution by 5pm using the template attached to the newsletter email.

Tunes we have loved (and some we didn't?)



Across

2. A hodgepodge
4. What cried last?
5. Seriously embarrassed little equine (3,3,4)
8. "My Mother" by palindromic group (4,3)
10. Peaceful at start
13. Comic sketch
15. Incendiary poet, on the march?
16. Board game
17. Revolutionary month
18. Main piece

Down

1. Uphill herb (8,5)
3. Prize-winning commission (4,3)
6. ...or was it a nightmare? (9,5)
7. Where did that Rossano Galante journey end? (5,6)
9. Wherein is the best of all possible worlds.
11. In where was this transatlantic cousin?
12. This Ives march once raised a cheer from the audience (7,4)
14. Mildly embarrassed feline (4,7)





Louise has shared an idea of how to keep busy during lockdown by spotting wildlife in your garden or during your daily walk. Louise says:

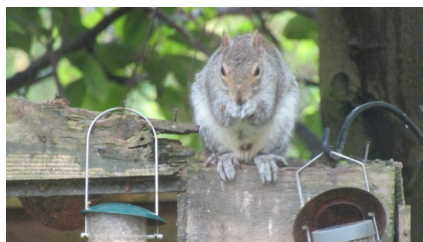
“As you know I am a Biology/Science teacher, but my undergraduate degree is in Zoology and I have always loved being out in and surrounded by nature. I love spotting wildlife and spend lots of time up north wildlife watching.

While this isn't possible just now, it does not mean we can't experience nature, either during our daily exercise or just looking out the window!

The RSPB are running a #breakfastbirdwatch on Twitter between 8am and 9am. It is a great excuse to get out into your garden if you have one, or see what you can spot on your daily walk, or even just look out the window. Then tweet what species you see.

I have attached some pictures of my wee garden visitors. If you want to get involved tweet (no pun intended!) the RSPB what you see to @Natures_Voice and use the hashtag #breakfastbirdwatch.”

Some of Louise's fantastic pictures are below.



For more chances to see some wildlife, why not have a look at the links below?

Loch Garten osprey live webcam

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/loch-garten/live-video-webcam/>

Wildlife webcams

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/webcams>

Recipe corner

This week, **Heather** has shared her recipe for lemon and poppy seed drizzle cake, which always goes down very well at band tea breaks. Heather has also shared an interesting story about her first attempt at baking the cake:

“When I was much younger my friend and I made this cake for the first time and somehow a teaspoon fell into the batter unnoticed and we baked the cake with the spoon in the middle. We couldn’t understand why when we cut into it the cake kept crumbling. Then we discovered the spoon! It is safe to say the first attempt at this recipe tasted disgusting and very metallic!! Thankfully this has never happened again and it is always very yummy!”

Lemon and poppy seed drizzle cake

Ingredients

- 175g (6 oz) soft unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
- 2 unwaxed lemons
- 175g (6 oz) golden caster sugar, plus 4 tbsp for the drizzle
- 3 medium eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 225g (8 oz) self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp flaky sea salt
- 3 tbsp milk
- 2 tsp poppy seeds



Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C for fan oven/350F/gas mark 4. Rub a little butter over the inside of a 900g (2lb) non-stick loaf tin, then line it with a strip of baking parchment, leaving some overhang at either end.
2. Finely grate the zest from the lemons, then squeeze the juice. Set the zest and juice aside separately.
3. Put the butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla, flour, baking powder, salt and milk into a large mixing bowl. Using hand-held electric beaters or a stand mixer, beat the ingredients to a thick, creamy batter. This should only take about 30 seconds. It’s important not to let the mix stand around too long once the wet ingredients have been mixed with the dry.
4. Add the poppy seeds and half the lemon zest to the bowl, then stir. Tip the mix into the lined tin, using a spatula to scrape the bowl clean. Lightly smooth the surface of the cake a little.
5. Bake the cake for 45 minutes, or until golden, risen and springy to the touch. To test if the cake is cooked, insert a skewer into the middle. It should come out dry. If there are traces of batter on the skewer, return the cake to the oven for another 10 minutes and test it again. Let the cake cool in its tin.
6. While the cake is still just warm, combine the lemon juice, leftover zest and remaining sugar, then spoon this evenly over the cake. Leave to cool completely. The lemon and sugar will harden to a zingy, crystallised crust.
7. Cut into slices to serve.



Keeping in touch

Don't forget that we've set up an online message board where you can post comments. Why not have a look and post a message for your fellow band members? Just click the link below.

<https://xoyondo.com/mb/6myg33qLg1QpWlb>

And finally...

Please feel free to contact us via the usual email address at any time:

dunbartonshireconcertband@gmail.com

Keep practising!

