



# Taking Notes

The Newsletter of Milton Keynes Brass



It's been another successful year for Milton Keynes Brass, however you choose to measure a band's success. On the contesting front we've consolidated our new position in the First Section, and appeared in the "Top 200" in the *4Barsrest* World Rankings for the first time in some years. Our performance bookings have been very varied, not to say interesting! (I didn't expect to play on the top of a scaffolding tower, or in the library of a stately home this year – but these things actually happened.) We have had few vacancies over the year, and those few have been quickly filled, and our attendances at rehearsals has been maintained at a consistently high level. These measures point to a happy, welcoming and interested, membership who are prepared to commit time and effort to their joint music making and self-improvement.

Many people contribute to making this happen: the families and friends of our playing members supply encouragement and support, and put up with practice noise and absent family members as bandsmen and women follow their musical hobby; our members devote many hours to playing, both practice and performance, and to the less glamorous activities of moving equipment, sorting music, setting stages and organising concerts; our volunteer committee undertake the practical management tasks which enable the band to function; many banding friends from other bands help us by filling empty places in the line-up when our own players are ill or on holiday. But a special mention must be made of our MD, Jonathan Mott who has directed and inspired the band so successfully again this year, and of course we must extend our appreciation to Dave Lewis, Nathan Waterman and Paul Fensom who have conducted the band when Jonathan has been unavailable (as well as playing where needed and often providing music and arrangements).

A massive "Thank You" to our members and all who have supported the band in any way in the past year – I hope you all have a happy Christmas Season and a brilliant New Year. Here is to us making another great year for MK Brass together in 2020!

David Johnston  
Chairman



Secretary - Tracy Brown

07985 586815

[tracy8brown@gmail.com](mailto:tracy8brown@gmail.com)

# Upcoming Engagements

December 2019

Friday 6th 4:00pm - 8:00pm	Niftylift MK Christmas Party	<a href="#"><u>Chalkdell Drive</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Shenley Church End</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK5 6GF</u></a>	Private Event
Saturday 7th 3:00pm - 4:30pm	Lights of Love (Willen Hospice)	<a href="#"><u>The Ridgeway Centre</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Featherstone Road</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Wolverton MK12 5TH</u></a>	Private Event
Saturday 7th 4:30pm - 5:00pm	Walton Community Carols	<a href="#"><u>Hindhead Knoll</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Walnut Tree</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK7 7NR</u></a>	Open Event
Saturday 7th 6:00pm - 9:00pm	Christmas Concert	<a href="#"><u>St. James the Great Church</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Hanslope</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK19 7LP</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Email for Tickets</u></a>
Sunday 8th 11:00am – 2:00pm	Waitrose	<a href="#"><u>3 Babbage Gate</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Oakgrove</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK10 9SU</u></a>	Open Event
Friday 13th 5:30pm - 8:00pm	Pavenham Golf Club	<a href="#"><u>High Street</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Pavenham</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Bedford Mk43 7PE</u></a>	Private Event
Saturday 14th 9:00am – 11:00am	Waitrose	<a href="#"><u>3 Babbage Gate</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Oakgrove</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK10 9SU</u></a>	Open Event
Saturday 14th 2:00pm - 3:00pm	MK Dons Football Match**	<a href="#"><u>Stadium Way</u></a> <a href="#"><u>West Bletchley</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK1 1ST</u></a>	Open Event
Tuesday 17th 6:45pm - 7:45pm	Loughton Manor First School Carol Concert	<a href="#"><u>Church of Christ The Cornerstone</u></a> <a href="#"><u>300 Saxon Gate</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK9 2ES</u></a>	Private Event
Tuesday 17th 8:00pm - 11:45pm	Band Christmas Dinner	<a href="#"><u>Slug &amp; Lettuce</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Manhattan House 401 Witan Gate</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK9 2BQ</u></a>	Private Event
Wednesday 18th 6:00pm - 7:15pm	Carols	<a href="#"><u>Buckingham Park Comm. Centre</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Jubilee Square</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Aylesbury HP19 9DZ</u></a>	Private Event
Saturday 21st 4:30pm - 5:30pm	Children's Christmas Concert	<a href="#"><u>United Reformed Church</u></a> <a href="#"><u>High Street</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Newport Pagnell MK16 8AB</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Click for Tickets</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Email for Tickets</u></a>
Saturday 21st 7:00pm - 9:30pm	Christmas Concert	<a href="#"><u>United Reformed Church</u></a> <a href="#"><u>High Street</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Newport Pagnell MK16 8AB</u></a>	Open Event
Sunday 22nd	Haversham Sailing Club Carols	<a href="#"><u>24 High Street</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Haversham</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Milton Keynes MK19 7DX</u></a>	Private Event

\*\*Collectors are required for this performance, if you are available and want to watch the game for free then get in touch with Tracy Brown on 07985 586815 or by email [tracy8brown@gmail.com](mailto:tracy8brown@gmail.com).

[Click on event address for directions](#)

For more information please feel free to contact us by [Email](#) or phone: Tracy Brown 07985 586815

# Recent Concerts

## A Festival of Creative Urban Living

Milton Keynes Brass took on the mammoth task of performing every evening at 6:30pm from 26th September until 13th October on Midsummer Boulevard in Central Milton Keynes.

The band performed a piece entitled “Good Morning Milton Keynes...Oh No It’s Afternoon” that was commissioned for the event in a unique collaboration between composers Spreafico Eckley and Matteo Fargion. The band were joined every night by a choir to sing words written especially for the event.

The main theme of the festival was ‘The Built, The Unbuilt and The Unbuildable’, looking at art, design and architecture in urban environments.

Through a free, public programme of new commissions, exhibitions, conferences and associated programmes, the Festival asked and explored the question “How do we live well in cities – now and in the future?” Within this macro exploration, the Festival attempted to address the micro – with a critical revision of MK’s urban planning ideals,



opening up debate and discussion concerning the founding design principles of the city, and their relevance or irrelevance to the 21st Century.

It has been commissioned by MK Council, funded by Arts Council England, and is programmed and curated by experimental architectural practice raumlaborberlin.

Through a multidisciplinary Festival programme, raumlaborberlin worked in collaboration with MK associations, organisations, community groups, cultural institutions and the active civil society in order to explore MK’s current urban reality and the city’s future prospects.

A Festival of Creative Urban Living included many art forms – with contributions from a range of cultural organisations, projects, artists, creatives, architects, designers, planners and urban theorists.

Housed in a series of temporary structures, located on Midsummer Boulevard East – the central spine of MK’s infamous grid road system, these new “spaces” provided a hub and a visual focal point for the Festival.

If you would like to hear a shortened version of the piece with the choir please click on the link.



## Recent Concerts

### Open University Graduation Ceremony

We recently had the pleasure of performing at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel at Stadium MK for two Open University Graduation Ceremonies.

The band played whilst everyone was entering the hall and finding their seats and then for the academic procession before and after the ceremony.

Once the ceremony was concluded we entertained the graduates with "Congratulations" and a few other suitable pieces.



### Remembrance Day Ceremony



On Sunday 10th November 2019 the band had the honour of performing at the Newport Pagnell Armistice Parade.

The band marched to the memorial and played a hymn whilst everyone was getting into position.

Our Principal Cornet player, Matthew Ball, gave an excellent rendition of "Last Post & Reveille" and the band concluded the proceedings by playing another hymn as the crowd dispersed.

### Newton Blossomville Church of England School Christmas Fayre

The bands first carolling engagement was on Friday 29th November this year. We had the pleasure of playing at the Newton Blossomville Church of England School Christmas Fayre. As in previous years, the event was very well attended and all enjoyed the food and mulled wine on offer. Everyone had a great time and we had many compliments on our carol playing. We hope the event was as successful as in previous years and we look forward to playing there again next year.



# Recent Contests

## Bolsover Festival of Brass

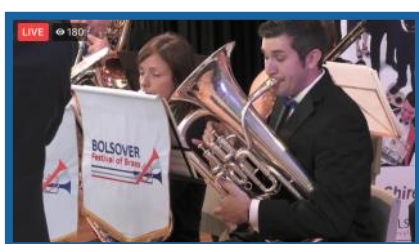
### 5th Place in prestigious Entertainments Contest



Last week-end (6th October) saw an early morning caravan of cars containing members of MK Brass hit the M1 trail north to Bolsover to take part in one of the top UK Entertainment Contests. The Bolsover contest not only attracts a high level of competition but is brilliant at presentation in today's social media world. The competition is live-streamed so supporters and audience can follow their favourite bands, and production values are really high – sound and video quality is superb, while informed and entertaining commentary provided between bands keeps the audience interested. Other contests take note, please!

MD, Jonathan Mott, had devised an intriguing programme of music for the band which provided the audience with a musical tour of South America. The band started with a linked trio of items demonstrating some of the rich rhythmic heritage of Latin-American music. First in the set came Peter Graham's "Amazonia" from "Windows of the World", (written for the Royal Norwegian Navy Band), evoking the sounds and atmosphere of Brazil's great river and jungle landscape.

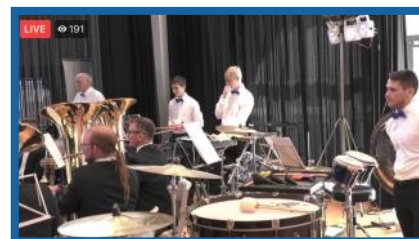
The Big Phat Band's infectious, toe-tappingly rhythmic "Samba del Gringo" by Gordon Goodwin came next (The arrangement for brass band is by J. V. Larsen, the Danish Composer-Arranger well known for his work with top Norwegian band, Stavanger), and thirdly Puerto Rican composer Rafael Hernandez's popular song "El Cumbanchero" arranged as a Cornet Solo by Goff Richards. A flamboyant rendering of the solo was played by MK Brass' Principal Cornet, Matt Ball, who treated the audience to the typical Mariachi trumpet style of Mexican street bands.



The mood and tone was then dramatically changed by a soulful rendering of "Chequilin de Bachin". This was a passionate musical response to the composer's (A. Piazzolla) and lyricist's (H. Ferrer) observations of a beggar-boy on the streets of Buenos Aires, Argentina; the sensitive, colourful arrangement is by Norwegian Reid Gilje.

The band's finale was the last movement of Martin Ellerby's *Evocations*, "The Royal Hunt of the Sun". The percussive music depicts the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire in Peru during the 16th Century, and provided an exciting close to the band's programme.

The band's performance was well received by the audience and adjudicator, who expressed particular praise for the band's Bass and Percussion sections. The band was pleased to be placed 5th in a field of 14 quality bands, some of which are already qualified for promotion to the Championship Section.



Full results available by clicking on the link on the left.

You can watch and hear the band's performance by clicking on the link on the right.



## Recent Contests

### Wychavon Festival of Brass



There was close battle between 18 well-matched contenders in the First Section, where adjudicator Sheona White was presented with the difficult task of picking a winner of the £900 first prize.

In the end it was Blackburn & Darwen that got their hands on the Festival Cup trophy with MD Daniel Thomas and their baritone section picking up the “Winning Conductor” and “Best Baritones” accolades respectively.

The north west band opened with “Chicken Run” followed by the tender euphonium sounds of 'The Green Hill' played by Jan

Waluriewicz. “Drums of Thunder” from “Windows of the World” offered contrast before they closed with “Vitae Aeternam”.

Just a point behind came welcome German visitors Brass Band Regensburg led by Dave Lea, with Enderby Band conducted by Ryan Richards in third.

The “Best Soloist” award went to Lianne Rees of Tylorstown for her lyrical rendition of “By Trevone Bay”, whilst the entertainment prize was picked up by fourth placed Manger Old Stars who made the trip to the event from Norway.

The remaining top-six places went to Tylorstown and Longridge.

Milton Keynes Brass had to be content with a 12th placing. We played the same programme as we had in Bolsover a few weeks before and in the opinion of some people had actually improved in this time but Sheona White wasn't convinced.

Sheona's remarks were very positive with lots of good comments about the band with the only negative being we were too loud for the venue. It goes to show a different day, a different adjudicator equals a different result.

The band would like to thank Nathan Waterman for stepping in and conducting the band whilst Jonathon was on holiday. Nathan worked the band hard and obtained a good performance, as many comments on the day proved. Unfortunately not with the adjudicator this time.



Full results available by clicking on the link on the left.

## Meet the Band

### David Johnston - Chairman



David started playing violin at of 11 when he started at his local Grammar School in Bletchley – this was not a successful start to a musical career, as he found himself seriously frustrated by this fine instrument. His family, who had strangely and inexplicably banned him to the garden shed to practice, seemed quite surprisingly supportive of his wish to try something else; his violin teacher too was behind his offer to stop torturing the cat-gut, and for him to try the trumpet.

The first experience of blowing a brass instrument also turned out to be a little frustrating, he recalls: his brass teacher had neglected to point out that the player's lips need to buzz, and be *inside* the mouthpiece - for the whole of the first group lesson no sound emerged and nobody noticed! Still, undaunted he showed up for lesson two, when, previous oversight corrected, his first brass

sounds emerged. Despite the false starts he was now hooked on Brass!

At 12 David joined his local brass band near home in Woburn Sands on cornet, and shortly afterwards the local youth orchestra in Bletchley, and as many local music groups who would have him!

As a teenager David won a place in the Buckinghamshire Youth Orchestra, initially as Principal Trumpet, but later as a Double-Bass player (an instrument he took up at 17). Following teacher training (when he specialized in music) David taught in a number of Milton Keynes schools and for the Stantonbury (now Milton Keynes) Music Service and more recently for Brent Music Service, conducting a variety of youth ensembles and as a classroom music teacher and brass peripatetic.

In his late 20's David left classroom teaching to follow a career in IT (he holds an MSc in Information Systems Design) but kept up his involvement with music teaching at the local music service, and playing activities in jazz and folk groups, orchestras, soul bands, as well as brass bands.

In 1984 David was one of a small group of musicians which founded Broseley Brass, now called Milton Keynes Brass, and when the band formed a development band some years later he was appointed its conductor. The Development Band competed for some years in the Fourth Section until David's ill health forced him to stand down as MD.

Asked what have been the chief influences in his musical life he gave two examples – Miles Davis's early recordings and hearing Eric Ball's "Journey into Freedom" for the first time in his early teens.

After 57 years in banding David remains an enthusiastic member of MK Brass's cornet section, and occasionally percussion section, and enjoys arranging music for brass and other ensembles. The best part of banding for him is sharing his hobby with many friends, and most importantly with wife Lizzie and son Kit.

## Follow the Band

Please follow the band by attending our concerts or just by social media (links below).



We hope you have enjoyed our newsletter and ask you to forward it to friends and family. If you have received this newsletter because a friend has sent it and you do not want to miss the next one then please click [here](#) and receive your own copy in future. Thank you for your support.



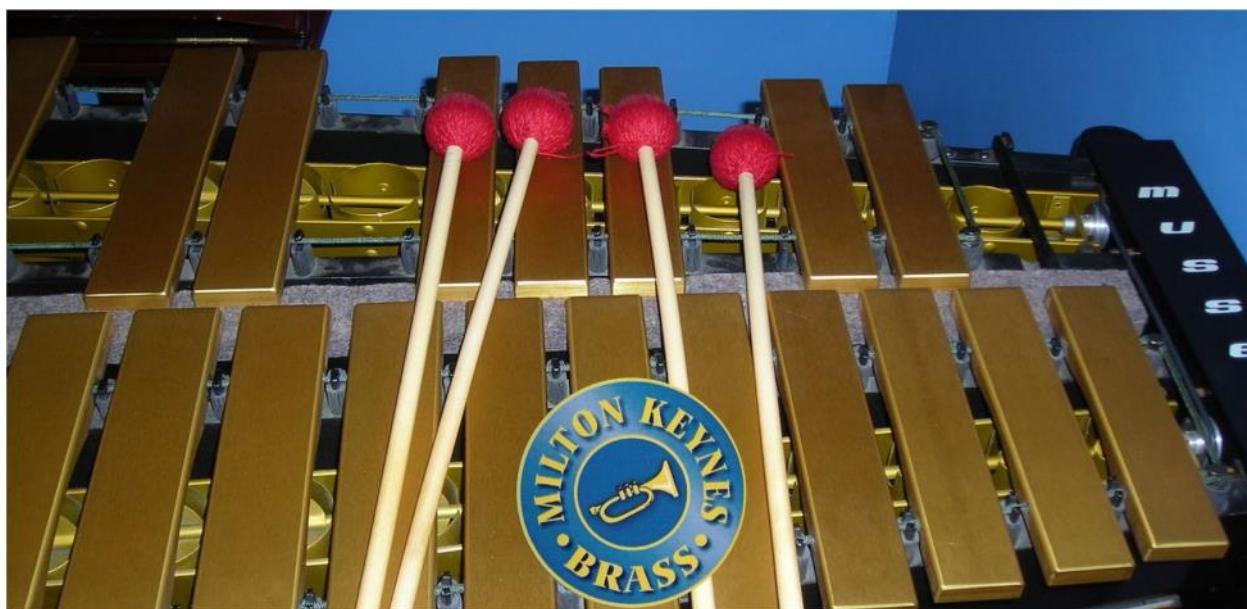
## Vacancies



requires a

### Bass Player

We are a Friendly 1st Section Band based in Milton Keynes and rehearse every Tuesday from 7:45pm – 10pm.  
Please contact: Sue Blunt on 07847 805825 or [sue.blunt@ntlworld.com](mailto:sue.blunt@ntlworld.com)



requires a

### Percussionist

We are a Friendly 1st Section Band based in Milton Keynes and rehearse every Tuesday from 7:45pm – 10pm.  
Please contact: Sue Blunt on 07847 805825 or [sue.blunt@ntlworld.com](mailto:sue.blunt@ntlworld.com)



# Local Band Engagements

December 2019



Saturday 14th Christmas Concert St. James Church New Bradwell



Sunday 8th The Snowman Egerton Hall Brackley

Saturday 14th Christmas in Kettering Church of St. Peter & Paul Kettering

## Olney Brass



Saturday 14th Christmas Concert Olney Parish Church



Saturday 7th Carols at Dobbies Garden Centre

Sunday 8th Carols at Bell Plantation

Sunday 15th Care Home Tour and Carols

Wednesday 18th Christmas Concert St. Lawrence Church

Thursday 19th Carols on the Square Towcester

Saturday 21st Carols at Morrison's



Saturday 7th Christmas Concert St George's Church, St George's Way, Wolverton

All December Carols around the streets