
Brass Bands and Orchestras in New Zealand: Band Participation as Seen by Orchestral Brass Musicians

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In popular discourse, brass bands are often construed as a culture unto themselves: a sound world of amateur performers drawn from the working masses and united by a repertoire of neo-romantic nationalist folk song, parade music and arrangements of popular songs.¹ The mass-mediated images conveyed in popular culture, including films like *Brassed Off* and music videos such as Gwen Stefani's *Hollaback Girl* show British and American brass bands defined by their performance environments rather than by the artistic content of their performances.² Popular discourse has also influenced the way that bands are positioned in academic research, leading to a range of publications (especially in music psychology and ethnomusicology) that examine the perceived unique personal characteristics of brass musicians on the one hand,³ and the adoption of brass bands as frameworks for new social meaning on the other.⁴ With some notable exceptions,⁵ there is far less interrogation of the place of brass bands within the Western art music tradition itself, with the analysis of brass bands more often relegated to an

¹ For the purposes of this article, the category 'brass band' includes amateur bands with civic or private sponsorship, but excludes the professional bands of New Zealand's military and police forces, as well as bands with a primarily religious composition or function. Brass bands usually comprise conical-bore brass instruments and percussion, though some of the bands referred to in this article for historical or contextual purposes may also include woodwind in their instrumentation.

² Mark Herman, *Brassed Off* (London: Channel Four Films, 1996); Gwen Stefani, *Hollaback Girl* (Los Angeles: Interscope Records, 2005).

³ Catrin Cribb and Andrew H. Gregory, 'Stereotypes and Personalities of Musicians,' *The Journal of Psychology* 133.1 (1999) 104–14.

⁴ For example, Gregory D. Booth, *Brass Baja: Stories From the World of Indian Wedding Bands* (Delhi/Oxford: OUP, 2005).

⁵ Trevor Herbert, *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History* (New York: OUP, 2000); Trevor Herbert and John Wallace *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (Cambridge/New York: CUP, 1997).

indeterminate constellation of folk, popular and 'other' music practices. This is manifested in the Australasian context where research tends to focus on the past history of brass bands, reflecting a subtle nostalgia for an era in which these ensembles were popular on a massive scale.⁶ Where contemporary studies do exist, they tend to centre on specific issues within band culture—such as Roland Bannister's informative analysis of gender stereotypes in the Australian Army Band Kapooka—rather than on the place of bands in national music culture.⁷

There is, however, good reason to examine the contributions that brass bands make in developing and training orchestral musicians in Australasia, especially in geographically isolated communities where the amateur band often constitutes the only local instrumental ensemble. This is particularly true of New Zealand, where small populations and long distances between cities result in a dispersed musical community. In his history of New Zealand brass bands, Newcomb observed that brass bands provide a training ground for musicians that can 'open the door to other fields of music making. Indeed, some of the foremost brass and percussion players in symphony orchestras received their early training in brass bands.'⁸ While a similar pattern of engagement may also be found in other countries with active brass band and orchestral music scenes, it is of special relevance in the New Zealand context because of the sheer number of civic brass bands (70) relative to civic orchestras (5).

Drawing from Newcomb's observation, this article presents an examination of the special relationship between brass bands and orchestras in New Zealand. It hypothesises that, contrary to mass-media stereotypes, New Zealand brass bands can be seen as a 'micromusic' within New Zealand's art music culture,⁹ and that there is some awareness within this art music culture of the contribution made by brass bands to the training of musicians nationally. Through a combination of historical research, ethnographic interviews and survey data, this article traces the development of brass performance in New Zealand bands and orchestras, and indicates the role that brass bands have played (and continue to play) in providing a formative ground for aspiring instrumentalists.

In order to ascertain the perception of brass bands within broader New Zealand art music culture, this research specifically sought participation from currently performing orchestral brass musicians across the county, for a number of reasons. Firstly, as performers and 'insiders' in both orchestral and brass band music scenes, we (the researchers) were aware of other brass musicians with similar performance trajectories to our own, and we hypothesised that there was a high probability that other orchestral brass musicians elsewhere in New Zealand would also have some sort of brass band experience. This meant that most orchestral brass musicians were probably capable of reflecting on brass bands through their own personal experience, rather than reiterating mass-media constructions. Secondly, as paid professionals, orchestral musicians have a great deal of agency in determining and guiding perceptions relating to

⁶ Duncan Bythell, 'Brass Bands,' *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: OUP, 1997); Stanley P. Newcomb, *Challenging Brass: 100 Years of Brass Contests in New Zealand 1880–1980* (Takapuna: New Zealand Brass Bands Association, 1980); Stanley P. Newcomb, *Music of the People: The Story of the Band Movement in New Zealand 1845–1963* (Christchurch: Mowat, 1963); Mark Pinner, *A History of Brass Bands in New South Wales 1788 to 1901*, MA(Hons) thesis, Macquarie University, 2004.

⁷ Roland Bannister, 'Soldier-Musicians in an Australian Army Band: Understanding the Lived Experience of Gender,' *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 28 (1996): 131–46.

⁸ Newcomb, *Challenging Brass* 7.

⁹ Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1993).

civic ensembles, and they also serve as role models for young musicians considering music performance as a career path. Thirdly, because there are only five professional and semi-professional orchestras in New Zealand, with limited and largely stable contingents of brass personnel, the data that we collected from these orchestral brass players provides, in some respects, a meaningful and statistically grounded representation of this performance culture on a national level. Finally, a projected upper limit of fifty-five participants (four French horns, three trumpets, three trombones and one tuba in each of the five orchestras) facilitated the design and implementation of the research, making the research project achievable.

In this article, our positioning of brass bands within art music culture is grounded in ethnomusicological theory. The antiquated definitions that once excluded art music from the field of ethnomusicology have been utterly discarded in the late-modern era, and excellent examples of art music studies by ethnomusicologists are widespread.¹⁰ Likewise, many prominent Western art music researchers now recognise the epistemic advantages of adopting and adapting ethnomusicological theories and methods in their own work.¹¹ Brass bands have long been of theoretical relevance to ethnomusicology because of their defining sociomusicological¹² characteristics. For many participants, 'banding' is an activity that defines them personally and collectively, and their ideological investment in the brass band medium provides a clear case for viewing bands through a Blackingesque 'music as culture' framework.¹³ While the research presented here is informed by these theories, it actually departs from them, as it is not our intention to present an 'insider' view of banding. Rather, our research specifically focuses on performers who occupy a more liminal position in relation to brass band performance culture, who view their participation in this culture as a component part of their overall musical lives.

Using Anthony Seeger's definition of ethnomusicology as a dynamic discipline capable of adapting methods from other disciplines as a starting point,¹⁴ the research method for this project incorporates historical research alongside informal ethnographic interviews and a 'mixed-methods' survey design.¹⁵ While survey research is not normally a feature of ethnomusicology, it has been used effectively in popular music studies, where examples such as Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil* demonstrate the usefulness of surveys in situations where the study group is widely dispersed and where both statistics and commentary are desired.¹⁶ Our decision to use a survey as the main method of data collection reflects the geographic dispersal of orchestral brass musicians in New Zealand, as we considered this to be the most effective way of contacting musicians from Auckland in the north of the country

¹⁰ See, for example: Kay Kaufman Shelemay, 'Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement: Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds' *Ethnomusicology* 45.1 (2001): 1–29.

¹¹ Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 1998) 99–101; Alistair Williams, *Constructing Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) 103–14.

¹² Charles Keil, 'Call and Response: Applied Sociomusicology and Performance Studies,' *Ethnomusicology* 42.2 (1998) 303–12.

¹³ John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Anthony Seeger 'Ethnography of Music,' *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen Myers (New York/London: Macmillan, 1992) 107.

¹⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, Applied Social Research Series 5 (California: SAGE Publications, 1994) 150.

¹⁶ Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover: UP of New England, 1993).

to Dunedin in the south. The survey included questions with predefined answers to select from and questions seeking open and unstructured responses. The results from this survey are only partially presented in this article, as it is not our intention to provide broad statistics on brass band participation but to illustrate the way that brass bands are perceived culturally. The full data from the survey is presented elsewhere.¹⁷ All interview and survey responses included in this article are presented anonymously.

The following history of brass bands and orchestras in New Zealand provides an indication of the established links between these distinct civic ensembles, and provides a foundation for our subsequent discussion of the brass band scene in New Zealand. This is followed by a summary of survey research findings grouped into the main themes that appeared in participant responses: education, musical diversity, performance culture and performance techniques. The article concludes with a discussion of the significance of these findings for New Zealand brass performance culture.

The Entwined Histories of New Zealand's Brass Bands and Orchestras

The nineteenth-century origins of brass band performance in New Zealand reflect strong cultural and colonial ties to Britain and Australia. On 2 June 1845, the Australian-based 58th Regiment band of the British Imperial Forces arrived in Auckland from Sydney. John M. Thompson suggests that the arrival of this band (along with the many other regimental bands that followed), signified the first major step in the development of a brass band movement in New Zealand.¹⁸ Nineteenth-century British migrants to New Zealand often brought brass instruments with them, and on arrival formed amateur bands throughout the country. The established role of bands in British industry as 'symbols of ... benevolence, a focus of company loyalty and an advertising device'¹⁹ for mining and manufacturing companies was also reflected in the colonial context. In the 1860s, brass bands were established in South Island gold mining towns,²⁰ and in the 1870s, some amateur New Zealand bands gained sponsorship from private industry, often adopting sponsor-company names. Throughout this period, bands served their communities through civic and military engagements such as street parades, ceremonial military marches and inspections, and adopted colourful uniforms based on military dress.²¹ Many of these bands still utilise the distinctive uniforms designed by their nineteenth-century founders.

In the 1880s, the New Zealand brass band movement was consolidated through the introduction of band contests, modelled on those of the United Kingdom. These contests provided a framework for peer engagement and incentives for developing performance skills and expertise. The first contest, held in 1882 in Christchurch's Hagley Park, was dominated by bands of military background and won by Timaru's C Battery Artillery Band.²² The popularity and success of these contests led turn-of-the-century bandleaders to propose an organisation

¹⁷ Gareth Hoddinott, *Perception of Brass and Brass Bands in New Zealand*, MusB(Hons) thesis, University of Otago, 2006.

¹⁸ John M. Thomson, *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music* (Auckland: OUP, 1991) 56.

¹⁹ Arthur R. Taylor, *Brass Bands* (St Albans: Granada, 1979) 27.

²⁰ Newcomb, *Music of the People* 20.

²¹ Thomson, *Oxford History of New Zealand Music* 58.

²² Newcomb, *Music of the People* 34.

to oversee contest structure and participation, leading to the development of regional banding associations and, in 1931, the creation of the Brass Bands' Association of New Zealand (NZBBA). The NZBBA still governs national band contests and actively promotes participation in brass bands through a network of education and liaison officers. In the twenty-first century national and regional competitions are held annually, and a grading system for bands (from A to D grade) ensures accessibility for groups with varying levels of experience and expertise.

A New Zealand national band was formed temporarily in 1903 to represent the nation on a tour of the United Kingdom. As an indication of the enduring military influence in brass band culture, this band donated funds raised through touring to the construction of accommodation for New Zealand soldiers and sailors in London.²³ Known as the 'Hinemoa' band (possibly because of an association with Alfred Hill's well-known composition *Hinemoa* from 1896) this ensemble nurtured the talents of many brass players who subsequently enriched their regional brass band scenes. Other prominent New Zealand composers such as Larry Purden (1925–1982) and John Ritchie (b. 1921) wrote works for brass band throughout the twentieth century, sometimes using Māori and pakeha settler themes and references to nationhood and civic landmarks, thus helping to reinforce the place of New Zealand brass bands within national concert music culture. The widely respected National Band of New Zealand, administered by the NZBBA, was first formed in 1953, also with a tour of the United Kingdom as its main goal. The band played 170 concerts over 17 weeks on tour including various competitions, the Edinburgh Festival, and concerts for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The National Band of New Zealand remains active to the present day, and its current membership of 35 players is auditioned and drawn from seventy community bands around the country.

The establishment of orchestras in New Zealand coincided with the beginnings of the brass band movement, but, without the military, industry and community support that underpinned the brass bands, civic orchestras relied almost entirely on the volunteerism and personal efforts of prominent musicians within the community. In one early attempt, George West assembled a fifty-member ensemble for the Philharmonic Society in Dunedin in 1865.²⁴ Other early orchestras were organised around special events, including performances by New Zealanders at the Melbourne Exhibition 1880–1881. In 1906, eminent New Zealand composer Alfred Hill was commissioned to form a government-funded orchestra to perform at the International Exhibition held in Christchurch to mark New Zealand's political transition from colonial to dominion status. This Christchurch Exhibition Orchestra (1906–1907) could be regarded as New Zealand's first professional orchestra. Following this exhibition, the orchestra's supporters formed the Christchurch Orchestral Society, and later, the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. In the main cities of Auckland and Wellington, prominent musicians collectively organised concerts and ensembles, leading to the foundation of the Wellington Orchestral Society in 1882, the Auckland Orchestral Union in 1889, and the Auckland Orchestral Society in 1903. The Wellington Orchestral Society changed to the Municipal Orchestra and then the Wellington Professional Orchestra early in the twentieth century. It changed once again in 1928 to become the Wellington Symphony Orchestra. The city of Wellington is now served by a professional orchestra with private sponsorship: the Wellington Vector Orchestra.

²³ Newcomb, *Music of the People* 56.

²⁴ Thomson, *Oxford History of New Zealand Music* 118.

Despite the clear evidence of active orchestral societies in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, a national orchestra was not formed until 1946, playing its first concert in Wellington in 1947.²⁵ Throughout the 1950s, a succession of guest conductors helped to consolidate the standard and repertoire of the orchestra and cement its place within the community. As air travel to New Zealand expanded in the 1960s and '70s, a series of international conductors and performers (including Igor Stravinsky in 1961) reinvigorated the cultural capital of the national orchestra.²⁶ The title of New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) was finally adopted in 1975. Subsequently, the Auckland Philharmonic, Wellington Vector, Christchurch Symphony and Southern Sinfonia orchestras have developed concert series around the touring commitments of the NZSO, which is still based in Wellington.

From the earliest days, orchestras in New Zealand depended on brass band musicians to fill orchestral brass positions, and the expertise of musicians with a brass band background was both acknowledged and respected.²⁷ As New Zealand orchestras changed from amateur to professional institutions in the mid-twentieth century, however, their relevance to brass instrumentalists also changed, as the professional orchestra format provided the possibility for these performers to view music as a potential career path. Presently, in addition to their concert series, orchestras such as the Auckland Philharmonic and Wellington Vector Orchestra accompany the NBR New Zealand Opera and Royal New Zealand Ballet. The Christchurch Symphony supports ensembles such as the Christchurch City Choir, Canterbury Opera, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet, and the Southern Sinfonia regularly accompanies visiting artists and productions such as touring operas and regional choral societies. All of these orchestras are also involved in education initiatives, sometimes in conjunction with the NZSO. These synergies reinforce the place of orchestras within the wider musical life of their respective cities, thereby providing performers with income streams beyond the part time or casual wages earned for the orchestral performances themselves. Conversely, brass bands continue to rely on the unpaid volunteerism of the performers that fill their ranks, and on the residual cultural capital of their historical place as providers of civic entertainment and ceremonial performances.

Both brass bands and orchestras rely on contestable funds from arts bodies, city councils and private sector institutions for their survival. As Newcomb once noted, however, the ability of brass bands to attract the paying public to concerts requires that they 'keep abreast of new developments in the entertainment field.'²⁸ In light of this, the cross-platform collaboration that characterised the initial growth of bands and orchestras has again become a feature of their performances. Bands such as the New Zealand Community Trust Woolston Brass Band (Christchurch) and Dalewood Auckland Brass (Auckland) both join their respective cities' orchestras to perform concerts each year, particularly Christmas concerts. Most recently, in 2007, Dunedin's St Kilda Brass Band commissioned and premiered a solo work for violin with band accompaniment, and programmed a joint concert with a Latin jazz fusion sextet. Similarly, the New Zealand National Band featured Australian jazz multi-instrumentalist James Morrison as the guest for its 2007 national concert tour.

²⁵ Beverly J. Tonks, *Bravo the NZSO at 50* (Auckland: Exisle, 1996) 25.

²⁶ Thomson, *Oxford History of New Zealand Music* 123.

²⁷ Thomson, *Oxford History of New Zealand Music* 115, 116.

²⁸ Newcomb, *Challenging Brass* 89.

Orchestral Brass Players and their Perceptions of Brass Bands

All five professional and semi-professional orchestras in New Zealand (the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonic, Vector Wellington Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and Southern Sinfonia) were contacted to seek brass players to participate in this research project, and almost all of the current players from all of these orchestras responded. Of the fifty-five surveys sent out, forty-nine were returned. This high response rate is indicative of the players' interest in the issue of how brass bands are perceived. Basic demographic data collected from these participants revealed a diverse population, but with some common characteristics. A strong majority of the performers considered themselves musicians by profession. More than half of these were established performers, aged between 35 and 55, with ten or more years of professional performance experience. Three quarters of the participants were male. Eighty-five percent of the participants were tertiary educated, and almost half of these held a postgraduate degree of some kind. These statistics portray a highly skilled, youthful and largely male-dominated community.

Most significantly, ninety-four percent of participants had some sort of experience performing in brass bands, and forty-one percent declared more than ten years of association with brass bands. Of these participants, seventy percent indicated that their brass band experiences had had a positive effect on their orchestral performances. Ninety-four percent of participants declared brass bands to be important, very important or essential in New Zealand music culture. When given the opportunity to comment at length on brass band performance culture, the respondents consistently referred to both positive and negative characteristics in four main areas. Firstly, participants indicated a significant role for brass bands in music education in New Zealand. Secondly, the topic of brass band culture was itself a key concern for many participants. Thirdly, participants indicated an appreciation of brass bands for adding to the overall diversity of performance opportunities, and finally, participants emphasised the role of brass bands in influencing technical development and performance practice for brass players. These areas are discussed in more detail below.

Brass Bands and Music Education

The orchestral brass players identified music education as one of the most important areas of influences for brass bands in New Zealand. About one in seven of the players surveyed declared that they had been educated in a brass band context from an early age, with a similar proportion joining brass bands later as part of a combination of school, private and band tuition. All of the participants began their brass tuition before the age of sixteen, making it reasonable to suggest that many of them first experienced brass band performance at an early age. Reflecting this, many of the participants commented on the continuing role of brass bands in music education, particularly with regard to their own students.

On the one hand, a number of respondents indicated a positive attitude towards bands as part of music education for younger instrumentalists. These respondents emphasised a number of positive aspects in brass band playing, including the value of ensemble experience, competitions as performance goals, and other factors:

[Bands provide] a great background to learning a brass instrument and learning ensemble skills.

This experience is invaluable as long as the experience does not exclude other genres (as so many brass bands tend to do).

[Bands are a] good way to develop ensemble playing and technical facility and to have goals (competitions etc)...also good opportunities for competition/travel.

On a more cautionary note, other respondents stated that they would not encourage their own students to participate in brass bands, largely due to their perceptions of performance technique:

I would not encourage [a student] to join a brass band. But if they wanted to I would support them. I would prefer them to wait until they were good enough to join at least 'B' grade in order to be around better musicians and a band that 'blows.'

Often techniques are developed incorrectly due to the often always loud texture and mixed intonation.

Brass Band Culture

The idea of brass band participation as entertainment was widely held among orchestral musicians, and even those who considered band repertoire to be challenging still regarded bands in this way. Tellingly, two thirds of the musicians surveyed described band participation as equally musical and social. This perception is largely due to the amateur (unpaid) nature of brass band participation, and probably reflects their own motives for participating in bands. Responses also likened brass bands to sporting clubs, indicating a range of shared characteristics:

[Players are] very dedicated and loyal to their band, more like a sports team. Very earnest in their endeavours ... many achieve very good playing skills without any financial return.

Boys (males) dominated. Loud, showy, 'brass in the park' sort of thing.

A bit of a 'blokes' image—lots of drinking, 'lads on tour' kind of image.

The tradition of brass band contests was identified by many respondents as a contributing factor to the sporting club analogy, with one respondent going as far as to state that this competitive culture 'detracts from simple musicianship and enjoyment at any level.' This socio-cultural characteristic was also identified as contributing to the way that orchestral brass musicians considered outsider perceptions of brass bands, including other orchestral musicians:

Although most orchestral players don't know much about brass bands, I think there is a tendency to view them as not proper music/musicians.

[They are] Generally ignored, probably even the best brass bands aren't much respected by orchestral musicians.

A lot [of people] view bands as inferior amateur organisations. Those who know, see them as a great training ground and an ensemble where technical fluency can be advanced.

[Brass bands are] held in fairly high regard for what they do and recognised as being good (well some of them) at what they do, although not taken terribly seriously musically. The traditional repertoire causes part of this perception, although reputation has changed significantly today.

Ultimately, however, respondents were quick to identify positive aspects in brass band culture, including one impassioned response:

They provide possibly the only context in which men and women, young and old can fraternise, perform and compete together. Most other clubs...are gender based and categorised according to age. They also provide a better microcosm of NZ society (still predominantly European of course) than you will find in most organisations. Good for teenage/adult bonding and understanding. These points are non-musical, but important none the less.

Banding and the Diversity of Opportunity

The high rate of orchestral brass player participation in brass bands is perhaps best explained by the desire of these performers to gain as much performance experience as possible. In some cases, this desire for diverse ensemble experience involved players changing instruments at different ages and stages, and for a variety of reasons. First, the development of aesthetic awareness and desire for a different 'sound' was identified as an instigator of musical change:

[I] started French horn at age 11 when I started Intermediate School. I went to the peripatetic brass teacher for cornet lessons (I'd switched to cornet by then), he was a French horn player, I had a go and it just started from there. I continued playing cornet in the local brass band for a couple of years but gradually stopped in preference to French horn.

Another participant stated:

I switched to horn (French) at 15 because the school brought [*sic*] one and wanted me to play it. I loved the sound immediately, more than the trumpet, and apparently took to it very quickly.

Second, participants indicated that changing instruments could sometimes lead to better financial security, particularly where uniquely brass band instruments such as cornet, tenor horn and baritone were swapped for ones that are used in a greater range of musical contexts:

I changed to baritone then euphonium and finally took up the trombone at age 13. The trombone had more opportunities as a brass instrument and I wanted to get an orchestral job.

[I] changed after 18 years to trumpet [because I] wanted a career in music.

Third, some performers indicated that external factors in their performance environment led to their change of instrument. One participant whose original brass instrument was the cornet stated, '[I] moved to tuba after three years of playing [because there were] not enough tuba players in the band I was in.'

Survey participants overwhelmingly identified orchestral and brass band repertoires as distinct areas of endeavour. While almost every survey participant indicated a love of orchestral repertoire, those who had some brass band experience also indicated an appreciation of band repertoire. The topic of repertoire, and particularly differences in orchestra and band repertoire and corresponding technical issues, elicited some detailed responses from participants:

The brass musician is generally more exposed in an orchestra: it is more difficult to conceal bad technique/intonation due to the timbre differences; brass band music is more often physically demanding of the lungs and diaphragm—long, loud sustained playing; orchestral music often requires brass entries after long periods of not playing; more demands placed on orchestral brass musicians with regard to reading music. Brass band music is generally notated in English, and written in one clef for a given instrument, and a given transposition. Orchestral brass players benefit from some acquaintance with Italian, German, French, Spanish and Latin, may be expected to read in multiple clefs and be able to sight transpose to and from a variety of keys.

Technical Development and Performance Practice

The previous statement concerning repertoire raises a number of points of difference between orchestral and brass band performance techniques. However most responses to this research considered technical development to be an issue for all brass students regardless of their ensemble affiliations. Technical areas such as breathing, articulation, embouchure, sound conceptualisation and vibrato were among the main issues identified, though precision in production, access to ensemble playing and musical enjoyment were also raised as key factors in student development. Interestingly, opinions varied widely as to the place of brass bands in addressing these issues:

Brass bands did not give me sufficient training in technique for a professional orchestral career.

The sheer number of notes and technical difficulty [in brass band repertoire] would provide a good challenge to an able student.

The music in an orchestra is better, and therefore more enjoyable...but there is nothing like having a good blatt through a march!

Respondents were also quick to acknowledge the level of skill required for high standard brass bands, and in some cases viewed band and orchestra participation as compatible and equivalent:

Generally there is respect for the top brass bands but the vibrato used (all the time) does not fit into the orchestral scene so well.

I believe the two are complementary: a brass band player would initially be lost in an orchestra, and vice versa. There is also great difference in the respective approach to the music, possibly due to the professional versus amateur nature of the two. In my experience, some brass band players do little to no rehearsal of the music in their own time, and learn their parts in the band. As a result, preparation for a concert generally takes a lot longer than for a paid orchestra. Better practice habits could be developed by spending some time in an orchestra.

It's a different take on the same mechanism. While there is a lot to be learned from an outstanding brass band player so too is there from an outstanding classical player. I think the difference is sound concept, which is why we use trumpets not cornets, French horns not Eb tenor and C tuba not Eb or Bb, trombones being the strongest link between the two groups. Our techniques should start from the same point however they seem to have different end goals.

The idea of ensemble compatibility, however, is a contentious one that elicited a wide range of responses:

They [bands and orchestras] are completely different and need to be treated separately. Bands have so many great things about them; they need to keep their identity separate from orchestras.

It would be great to see French horn players up and down the country playing in brass bands. This would certainly raise the number of players and hopefully the awareness of the instrument.

I believe the brass band movement in NZ needs to start looking more at orchestral styles at the same time orchestras need to be more enveloping of the brass bands.

Conclusion

The culturally engaged appraisal of brass bands presented in this article highlights a number of significant findings. First, demographic statistics clearly show that there is a high rate of participation by orchestral brass players in brass bands in New Zealand, indicating some continuity in the culture of collaboration that characterised the era in which these ensembles were established. Furthermore, respondents frequently emphasised their ability to play in both contexts effectively without compromising their performance ability in either. Second, while differentiating clearly between the relative strengths and weaknesses of brass band participation for orchestral musicians, the participants in this study generally viewed band participation as a positive experience, and overwhelmingly recognised that brass bands have an important place in New Zealand's music culture. Third, the degree of candour and passion expressed by some participants when indicating the benefits or detriments of brass band participation demonstrates the seriousness with which orchestral brass players view brass bands as performance ensembles. Finally, participants' comments on the educational role of brass bands clearly locate these ensembles within a vitally important sector of New Zealand music culture—a sector that the orchestras themselves consistently seek to engage with. These responses firmly locate brass banding within the broad scope of New Zealand's art music tradition.

The observations presented in this article acknowledge a role for brass bands in the future development of orchestral brass musicians, especially by providing developing and established players with diversity in musical experience. Brass players in New Zealand clearly have little difficulty in participating in both orchestral and brass band environments, and historical precedence suggests that the survival of both areas relies on them continuing to do so. While this confluence may not be unique to the New Zealand context, it is revealed in this article as a definable characteristic of the nation's music culture and should therefore be recognised, celebrated, and subjected to further investigation.