

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME PRACTICE FOR CYBB MUSICIANS

Practical tips from Aaron Harvey

In my article for the 2013 Summer Newsletter, I talked about how the music was chosen for each course and highlighted that one of the restricting criteria was our limited rehearsal time. This leads me on to the importance of home practice for each of the members.

When you pass your audition and join the CYBB it is because you are considered one of the best young players in the county with the potential to progress and improve. This will be as a result of your own desire to develop your playing standards and through being amongst a group of similarly-minded people. I can be pretty certain that you made sure that you were well practised for your audition and probably nervous before your very first monthly rehearsal – both a sign of your desire to do the best that you possibly can.

Throughout your time with CYBB you need to ensure that you keep that same philosophy – you are a member of a large team, each as important as the other, where you have to play your part (quite literally!).

The fact that we are able to play challenging music with such limited rehearsal time can only happen if you take time to practise at home.

How to Practise

A lot of people see practising as a chore but strangely enough the more you practise, the better you become and the more you will WANT to practise.

Try to practise in a place where you feel relaxed and are not likely to disturb anyone unnecessarily. I know this can be difficult with brothers and sisters trying to do homework etc but maybe you could practise in your band room, if it's close by – as a boy I used to practise in our garage! Listening to your practice routine may not be especially soothing for those in the same house but it could give you a good reason to ask for a practice mute next birthday or Christmas.

It is important to give yourself realistic aims when you practise – just blowing through anything soon becomes tiresome when it sounds the same as it did 30 minutes before. Instead, highlight an aspect of a piece, maybe a slow section or a tricky passage, and try to improve it by thinking about ways to make it better – would false-fingering make it easier, can I breathe in a different place etc. Try these things and when they are successful you will have a real sense of achievement – practising will make sense.

Section Tutors

During the monthly practices and the course, we are here to guide you and use our own experience to get the best from your playing (many of us were your age once and also played in the CYBB!). The most effective way to use the sectional is to make sure you have practised the music as hard as you can at home and to know the parts that you need to work on when we meet up. Tutors are quite happy to answer questions and help the whole group master the harder aspects of the music – in fact it is great to hear you say “I’ve tried this part but I’m still having trouble with it”. Once again there will be a great sense of achievement for the whole group when you work together to get it right.

Remember we are totally dependent on each other to achieve the best standard we can, with the rehearsal time that we have - “Practice and preparation make for a perfect performance”.

Good luck,

Aaron Harvey