



Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds

Welcome to Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds (“NOW”).

This information forms the basis of a written constitution and is designed to help you understand how the Community Wind Band College functions. This should enable you to enjoy participating with us, clarify how you fit in, and understand what is expected of you as a member of “NOW”.

NOW’s Vision

NOW’s vision comes from the Musical Director, Andrew Bassey, a Professional musician and conductor with over 20 years experience in teaching, playing and conducting. Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds is a Community Wind Band College, probably the world’s first. The aim is to offer affordable music tuition on all Wind Band instruments to all in the community (typically from age 9), from complete beginner to professional level. NOW offers a complete system of Wind Band groups (subject to numbers) that cater for every level of ability. NOW offers performance opportunities to soloists, both for student and professional, as well as opportunities to play music written by living English composers, whether in large or small ensembles.

Our aim is for all students and participants to grow musically, technically, and conceptually.

Main Achievements of NOW

The Main Band has produced a CD which can be purchased from the Musical Director or at concerts. The Main Band was also selected to perform in Carnegie Hall New York, which performed on the 26th March 2008 to standing ovations from an audience of over 1000 people.

The Main Band began in October 2005 with only 9 players. In January 2007 NOW began its first starter Wind Band class. Since then a further 3 classes have emerged and the first Community Band began in September 2007. The title of the Community Band is ‘NOW Community Band’.

Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds – NOW’s Main Band

The Main band is NOW’s shop window and Showcase ensemble and therefore assumes the full title ‘Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds’, and tends to play very challenging new repertoire, to assist in the further development and stretching of its advanced membership. Some members may be musicians that play professionally outside the Main Band and may not be able to attend rehearsals regularly, usually because they live a great distance away or are often playing for income; they may, at the sole discretion of the Musical Director, opt for ‘ad hoc’ status. These players may play in concerts and events – but need to apply for ‘ad hoc’ status first. These players must have a very high degree of professionalism and skill and in most cases will not have to pay a fee to be member of NOW. If you think you fall into this category please speak to us. From time to time experienced professionals or very advanced Music College students may be drafted in at the sole discretion of the Musical Director to perform in specific events. These players may even be given Principal position status for that specific event. Regular players may be affected by this (while the Main Band does not have an appointed Principal player in a specific chair) and may have to step down, but will be notified at the earliest available opportunity: this is only done for the benefit of the whole Wind Band College as the Main Band must maintain a high degree of performance in very challenging repertoire. At the sole discretion of the Musical Director some players may be paid expenses and/or a fee for their services. Entry to the Main Band is on production of a grade 8 certificate and/or an audition. [All positions in each band are at the discretion of that particular band’s director.]



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How is NOW organised? The NOW Board

The officers of the Board consist of Chairman, Treasurer, Board Secretary, and Membership Secretary, Librarian, Webmaster, Marketing and Publicity Managers (or Media Manager), Events Manager, Audience Development Officer, Community Band Administrator and other officers as the Board feels them necessary. Members of the Board are co-opted as the need arises. The NOW Board of Officers tend to deal mainly with the running of Main Band events, sponsorship, funding, promotion, publicity and planning.

The Community Band has its own sub-committee that organises its own events and functions.

The Starter Bands are managed by our Musical Director. The Beginner, Intermediate and Training Bands will happen but are subject to numbers of applicants and will be managed also by our Musical Director. There are two types of starter band 1) Starter band designed for total beginners who have never played an instrument before and cannot or can hardly read music, and 2) 'Fast Track' Starters who can read music already and have achieved at least grade 3 standard on any musical instrument.

Please apply on-line to join any group and/or to be put on a waiting list to learn an instrument and play in a band. If still confused please ask. We must emphasise all group activity is subject to the number of applicants.

How is NOW structured?

'NOW' has five different levels of ensembles with a very strong emphasis on education. The Starter to Intermediate Bands will use tutor books as their main educational tool. This includes Music History, Theory, and Aural with periodic quizzes to assist memory in the learning process.

- Main Band - grade 8 to professional
- Training Band grade 6 - 8
- Intermediate Band grade 4 - 6
- Beginner Band grade 2 - 4
- Starter Band grade 0 - 2

Community Band grade 2 - 6

The Community Band is for all players that have completed the one year starter course, a one term 'Fast Track' starter band refresher course, an audition, or on production of a grade 2 exam certificate. The Community Band generally plays lighter music and will be performing in community fetes and as part of light concerts.

Progression through NOW

NOW is a complete training system in band instruments developed for the people of the community (typically from age 9 to any age). Younger children must learn with a parent/carer for help with understanding and to keep the starter class running at a good pace. There is opportunity to move up through the system even to Main Band level which can be achieved from scratch in 5 to 7 years. Beginners typically can achieve approximately Grade 2 associated board standard in their first year of playing! Plans for the future involve a Jazz Band training system.

Other Ensembles

Some Main Band players will have further opportunities in the following groups but participation is at the discretion of the Musical Director.

- The NOW Jazz Orchestra
- NOW German Band



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- NOW Chamber Wind Ensemble
- NOW Brass Ensemble
- NOW Wind Octet
- NOW Wind Quintet
- NOW Brass Quintet etc.

Our smaller groups above can play at chamber music concerts, weddings, functions, parties, etc.

NOW Occasional Choir

From time to time the Main Band will perform works with chorus. Any singer who can read music and sight sing can apply for this. It does not cost anything and will require only 3 or 4 rehearsals prior to a performance.

Rehearsals

Main band rehearses on Tuesday evenings, 7.30pm – 10pm at Church of Christ, Shadowfax Drive, Overstone Lodge, Northampton, NN3 8DB. A map is available upon request and is also available from the website (www.now4band.co.uk)

The Community band rehearsals take place in the Church of Christ also but on Thursday evenings 7pm – 9.30pm.

The Starter Band classes are held in various places. Participants in Starter, Beginner and Intermediate bands must start the courses together for continuity as they are all 12 – 18 month courses. Please ask for details and check the website for start dates and venues.

Signed and paid up members can play in any lower group *on the same instrument* free of charge. Please ask if you would like to do this. There may be breaks in the rehearsal schedule during school holidays, and these will be announced at rehearsals and published on the website in advance. Please try to remember to bring a music stand as none are provided. Refreshments are provided in the break of each band rehearsal for which donations are thankfully received.

Conduct in Rehearsals and Events

Rehearsal time is an important and limited resource, so please arrive in plenty of time to start playing and help your conductor to make the best use of the precious time available. Please respect what is done and act in a professional manner at all times showing courtesy and consideration for Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds Wind Band College, your conductor or Musical Director and others around you. You are required to behave in a professional manner at each performance/event.

Attendance

All ordinary members are expected to attend all rehearsals and all events. Commitment will help you and your group develop and maintain high standards; casual non-attendance lets everyone down and continued none attendance may result in expulsion from NOW.

Sheet music and other assets

You are responsible for all music in your care. The music is one of NOW's biggest assets and much of it is either expensive to replace or in some cases irreplaceable so please look after it. Never make marks of any kind except in soft pencil. **If you borrow any music to practise please ensure it is returned for the next rehearsal even if you are not going to be there.** There may be other players who need the music at the rehearsal as we are trying to ensure all parts are covered at every practice. NOW owns percussion and other instruments including a Bass Clarinet and Double



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Bassoon. They are all to be treated with the utmost care and are to be played by persons who have been given permission by the Musical Director. Please be available to help with set up and clearing away before and after events where large instruments are used.

Repertoire

As the main focus is education the main band in particular will be playing music at the 'cutting edge' of compositions today. There may be times when you are not so keen on a particular piece - please still play enthusiastically and as well as you can in a professional manner. The conductor is always very keen to hear your comments on the music after rehearsals and concerts, and welcomes suggestions for items to play or for purchase. There is a library list published on the website.

Musical and Technical challenges

If you feel you are not being challenged enough please bring this to the attention of the conductor (after the rehearsal). It may be appropriate for you to audition for a higher position in the group or for another ensemble. Please email or speak to your conductor.

Concerts

The proposed timetable for concerts will be published in advance. We also aim to run at least two composer weekends a year (funds permitting), and the repertoire will mainly be new music from living British composers. These events may have an invited conductor or composer or both and a soloist, but cannot happen without the support of members. All Main Band events are expensive (particularly exciting and ambitious projects) and losses have to be covered by the Musical Director. Therefore financial controls must be taken into account for the overall welfare of NOW. **Events may be cancelled if it is deemed losses will be too great for NOW to absorb.** Member support and understanding is essential in this regard.

Promoting playing opportunities and events

It is the responsibility of all members to help with the promoting of your group, even if it is by just telling other musicians about playing opportunities in any band or about concerts. Please make an effort to advertise concerts and help with ticket and CD sales and the promotion of the group generally. NOW does not receive any external funding from Arts bodies as it is not a Charity. Funding comes from members and concert goers, and any losses are covered by the Musical Director. Expansion of the Wind Band College and more playing opportunities are largely down to NOW member support. Please be creative and imaginative; you can use the internet, websites, forums, newsletters, putting up posters etc. Anything positive that comes to mind please go ahead.

None Main Band Groups

From the Training Band downwards, these groups are mainly set up for teaching, development, and training purposes. They may however, from time to time, at the discretion of the Musical Director, perform in public. The Training Band may well perform in Festivals, and outdoor concerts on a more regular basis. The Community Band will perform in events in the community and concentrate on a lighter repertoire.

Dress Code

The dress code for both men and women is the same: Black trousers, black socks, black shoes and NOW polo shirt, ladies may wear black stockings or tights instead of socks. You will have to purchase the relevant colour polo shirt for the concerts at £12 each. Each group will have a specific colour apart from the Main Band which will have all the colours of the Sun Rise.



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Colours

The inspiration behind the colours is our Musical Director's son's Autistic therapy which is called the 'SonRise' Programme. Just like the morning sunrise you are filled with a sense of joy in the present and great hope for the future, but it takes love, support (including volunteers) and dedication to achieve the necessary goals.

Contact Details

Please ensure you register through the website providing full contact details including mobile and telephone numbers, email address and postal address, and email us if there are any changes.

Website

The website is a valuable communication tool for the College and we would like you to use it. We have an area with up-to-date information about concerts, special rehearsals, and possible future events. Any comments on the website should be sent to the webmaster@now4band.co.uk

Fees

Fees are set as reasonably as possible to encourage as many people as possible to participate. Starter Band fees are payable in advance for a 10 or 12 week period and are set at only £2 per hour. The classes are 2 hours in length each week. All other group membership is usually payable by monthly £10 Standing Order. Please complete and sign the Standing Order form and take it to a branch of your bank, or if you can use internet banking it may be more convenient for you to set it up from your PC. If payment by standing order is not possible please contact the MD at md@now4band.co.uk to discuss alternative payment.

Discontinuation of NOW membership

If you are dissatisfied with the services NOW provides please address your concern to the MD or The NOW Board and preferably in writing, we will do what we can to address your concern. If you are no longer willing or able to be a member of NOW please write to the MD to rescind your membership. Please return all property owned by NOW.

NOW reserves the right to rescind or refuse membership for non-attendance, non-payment of fees, or other matters which show discourtesy to others and a lack of professionalism. This is done for the good of the whole of the NOW community.

Responsibilities

As a member of Northamptonshire Orchestral Winds you have certain responsibilities, which is really common courtesy:

- to attend rehearsals on time and regularly
- to contact the section principal or conductor if you cannot attend
- to reply to e-mails from the MD, conductor, or any officer
- to ensure your personal details are always up-to-date
- to use the website and keep apprised with events
- to pay the required fee
- to take care of music and return it when required
- to help promote NOW's activities

I agree with and accept the above responsibilities

Signed _____ Date _____

Print Name _____