

Graham Lindsey - President's Report (2016-17)

The past nine years have been great (please read to the end of this report for a four page colour retrospective).

For Exec and Committee changes this year, we had only one change: with many other work and musical commitments, Chris Thiessen stepped down as Music Committee Chair. His work over the past few years has helped us out of a few tight spots with music selection. Evan Huus stepped in as the Interim Chair - thank you to both.

This year I will step down as President, after having nine good (in my view, at least!) years under my belt. I've done a few things over the years, but more importantly my Executive was there to help in every respect with our good ideas - so it's helpful to have ideas and essential to have an outstanding team able to execute them.

Last year we had our first three-concert season in the series and it was very popular from a ticket sales standpoint. While many in the band wanted to play four concerts in the series, playing three seems to make more sense for our attendees, who are out in greater numbers - and as previously mentioned, more people out to the concerts means we don't have to do fundraising which takes a lot of time on the part of the people organizing the activity. I'll reiterate the need to "Share" and "Like" the Facebook events and tell your family, friends, colleagues, enemies and pets about our concerts - because we're not just trying to cover our costs, but if we can expand our revenue we'll be able to purchase more and more interesting music.

Another idea was that we could reach beyond the three concerts and play a senior's residence, and plans are in the works for that next year (which is technically coming up this calendar year, based on the date covered by this report).

Last year we got lots of merchandise (shirts, music totes and about 14,234* pencils) and it was snapped up by the band. A special thank-you goes to Jenn Brinkhurst for handling all the orders from everyone, dealing with the printer, and picking up all the merchandise when I was unable. Job well done!

Our three concerts this year were: "Movie Matinéés" (our Pops concert), "Simply Christmas", and "A Lot of Hot Air" (our concert featuring wind band music), where we tried to give our audiences a lighter concert (pops), our annual Christmas extravaganza and a concert with some more 'meaty' music that would challenge us and be interesting to our audience's ear.

The Music Committee attempted to meet but wasn't ever able, and that's a serious issue that the Executive and Committee will address - plus, if the Exec is still interested in my help after the election, I will stay on (without any title) with the job of getting things rolling again with the Music Committee. For the record, the band President doesn't need to sit on the Music Committee but in recent memory, that has been the case. I don't think it's essential, but my goal after stepping down will be to ensure Terry's needs in terms of Music Committee help are met.

Despite a slight drop in players attending Lake George in 2017, we still had plenty of fun (and Martha's Dandee Creme) - and we only had the same guests in each section that we'd had before, so we didn't need too much support to give the band a good sound. Many of our summer members like to attend Lake George, so that's where we draw from many sections. Our friends in the Concert Band of Kanata joined us at the Travelodge and we both played the festival, which represented Ottawa nicely. We'll investigate going back every two years in case that helps bolster our attendance.

Mary Blais, who was our Assistant Conductor, stepped down in February. It wasn't clearly stated at band, but it's only fair that I explain the reasons: it boils down to organization, attention and respect. Organization is the responsibility of the Executive and Conductor - and we're specifically working on making sure things are better-organized, because if we've thought through things it'll make rehearsal more effective. We've been improving things over the years and will continue to do so - this includes rehearsal start/end times, distribution of music to musicians, etc. In terms of "Attention", Mary pointed out that we're not playing articulation, dynamics, phrasing (etc.) even after they're pointed out - and that's an area where we can grow musically. It was almost as if some players were apathetic to the suggestions being given - and since we've brought you very specific conductors because they have something to contribute, important things are being said and missed. Also, Mary addressed that talking in rehearsal (especially as she was trying to give instruction), happened regularly - and many have noticed this is not just with Mary. Many times a night it's difficult to hear the conductor because people are talking, so for the last year or so I've been making an attempt to keep things quiet by asking others around me to not speak when the conductor is giving directions - perhaps you can do the same in your area. This will contribute to making the band a more positive environment for all.

I also want to emphasize the difference between practice and rehearsal. Practice needs to happen at home, and everyone (even the best players) can benefit from it - I suspect the people who sound the most professional and polished already practice regularly. Rehearsal happens Wednesdays when we come together to work the pieces we've practiced. In some cases, I've heard parts get dramatically better after three run-

thoughts in band, and I know when that's the case with me it's because I've read through it three times and then get a lot more right notes (ie: I haven't practiced). We're always striving to be a better sounding band, so the Executive appreciates your spending time on the music at home so we can work on putting the pieces together.

Terry things highly of us, and we can live up to his expectations - but it's now our job to listen, practice and perform a little bit more effectively. The Executive and Conductor will continue do our best to improve in our jobs to continue the band's improvement.

While Terry was away for the latter half of the summer at his cottage on PEI, we had the opportunity to have a number of excellent conductors in: Leela Kowlessar, Jill Pensa, Laurie Hamilton, Hugh Johnston and Gordon Craig - as well as Dave Yensen who stepped in when needed. Each of these guest conductors have been able to give their own perspective and some of their wealth of musical knowledge, and I appreciate their making the time to join us. With the loss of Mary as our full-time Alternate Conductor, we're searching for a few who are willing to be called-in when Terry is unable to make it - and we've found some good possibilities!

Cairine Thomas has continued to help to keep our concerts exciting (including balloons for the Hot Air concert, and more, of course!), and I hope she will continue because her work adds another dimension to our concerts. Thanks so much, Cairine!

Continued thanks to Stephen Baskey for his work on the NCB website's photo section. A reminder: if you have photos from concerts, you can send them to photos@nepeanconcertband.com and Stephen will add them the site. He's way more effective than the last guy! (...me.)

In the last few years we've continued to expand the role of section leaders, and if you've been asked if you're attending a concert up to two months before a concert, that's a sign that it's working. If you can't make a concert, or a rehearsal, your section leader must know this so they can be aware of it. The Executive needs players to make a majority of the rehearsals before a concert so we don't have last-minute players added (because we need everyone on the same page). Also, a reminder that if you have an issue within your section, first go to your section leader. If they can't help (or if the issue is with them), come to the President if it's anything other than music, or your section leader can go to the conductor and they can resolve the issue.

I for the past bunch of years I've been percussion section leader, member of the Music Committee and band President, and I have to thank so many people who contribute to making the band so successful. For years, Dave Oulton has help set up the percussion

instruments weekly after he sets up the chairs – and he has been at the church to help coordinate the setup before every concert. Tanya, Jenn, Pierre, Michelle (and Richard), Terry, Grant, John, Karen, Cairine, Rhonda, Isaac, Linda, Shaun, James, Don, Warren, Becca and Joe, Dan Yau and Mary – they all helped move instruments before or after a concert or rehearsal, and I can't express how much we appreciate it.

****I'm missing people, I know it - and I'm very sorry, and even more appreciative!****

Everyone who helps after rehearsals is a huge help too - it's simple to pack up your instrument and get out in time for our 9:45pm deadline... but as a percussionist somehow it takes longer! Gary Thomas who helps to set up the church and runs our bake sales along with Jean-Guy Jacob (Pam's Jean-Guy, of course), Jim and Dylan (Karen Craven's husband and son, respectively). Warren and Doug, our music library gurus who are an essential resource for the band - a group that requires their knowledge and organization. Barb Lamb, who sends cards on behalf of the band, sometimes without our knowing that a card is warranted until after it arrives. Sharon Flack helps Rosemary collect money at rehearsals so Rosemary can do other things that need to be done. Pat & Keith Lindsey for collecting donations at AHP. Dave Oulton for recording our concerts at City View United Church and posting them so quickly after concerts for us to hear - usually the same day. Everyone on the Music Committee (including Evan Huus, the committee chair and Chris Thiessen, outgoing chair), and all section leaders who let me know how many people we can expect in each section for the concert. Tanya Chang (whom I forgot in last year's minutes - apologies for that, Tanya!) has been designing our concert posters, and Karen Craven has been doing the band's publicity for a couple of years now, and we've been getting calls asking details about the concert. We've been advertising in a number of free online websites, as well as the Ottawa Citizen's concert listings and we've been averaging one pre-recorded Public Service Announcement (PSA) on CBC's In Town And Out since the start of the concert series - so thanks to Karen for a job well done!

The Executive is a hard-working group of people and we do our best to make NCB a fun place to play. It takes a lot of energy, and I like to thank the executive members every year. Linda Taylor is our General Manager and she books concerts, sells tickets, and does whatever is needed to keep things moving - plus, she is among the first to ask if the percussion section needs a hand (which we often do, given we've got three members and all three are on the Exec). Rosemary is our newest Exec member, our treasured treasurer, and is always on top of budgets, cheques to be signed and generally everything financial. Warren is our tireless librarian who devotes hours and hours to what we've called "the MegaPull™", where people put their music in order in the folders and Warren somehow sorts through everything and we don't end up spending 45 minutes putting our music back in folders - it is just done, and I know everyone in the band appreciates Warren's work, even if they don't know he does it.

Pam is our membership person, welcoming people to band, keeping track of the phone/email list and announcing the latest news at break. Rebecca (Becca) is our equipment manager, and she books the truck so we don't have to ask for fifteen vans to take our gear to gigs... but every couple of years we hit a day where the truck has already been booked - and that means we have to call for fifteen (okay, three) vans to move all our gear. Peter Vogelsang was added to the Exec the very last day before this fiscal year began, and he's our secretary - meaning he writes all the meeting minutes, and helps to keep us organized and on track.

Every year I try my very best to ensure that I haven't forgotten anyone from the thank-you list, and I can rarely remember how many cats I have (it's one, folks... just one). Every year I can be certain I've missed at least a few people, I apologize for the oversight - and thank you so much for helping to make the Nepean Concert Band so much fun!

Thank you for all your support over the past nine years!

Graham Lindsey
President

* The margin for error on the pencil count is 13,734.