

## WHERE THERE'S BRASS THERE'S MUSIC

The Trust Waitakere Brass Band and their leader Steven Booth have now established a Youth Band to build on from their already impressive achievements.

I went to a rehearsal on a sunny spring evening and found everyone in very cheery mood. The senior band had just won several firsts at the Auckland Band Association's Contest, including Entertainment Band of The Year, and the following week they were off to an invitation-only contest at Coolangatta on the Gold Coast to compete at the Federation Of Australasian Brass Bands, Australasian Open Contest.

The Youth Band was announced at the recent Toys 4 Kids concert. It's a small band and a new one, and I would not have been surprised to find them still very tentative. I hadn't bargained with director (and horn soloist) Claire Whyte, who clearly knows what's what; she's a school music teacher, and spent five years conducting the Kumeu Youth Band, and she had these guys playing sweet-as in five minutes.

Aniva-Storm Feau, Chris Lijzenga and Josh Singleton are classmates at Te Atatu Intermediate, where there is a lot of music. The Power Learning Café extension class (PLC) has a concert band, and each chose the instrument they would play. Why did you choose trumpet, I asked Chris and Josh: "For the sound!" they said, together. Aniva like the trumpet too, "but I chose cornet, to be different." She has a long experience of music; "I played violin first, then switched to guitar. I got real tough fingertips from playing a lot, then stopped for a while. Since I started cornet I'm back playing guitar as well."

Nathaniel Moody plays "a little piano, I play around" and started trumpet a little over a year ago. He's at Green Bay Primary, and hired a trumpet through KBB until his last birthday, when he got his own instrument, "Once we were sure he'd taken to it," said father Stephen. He plays guitar and tried to teach it to Nathaniel. "But I've always liked the trumpet, from going to concerts when I was really little."

Music in the family is a recurring theme. Aniva "knows lots of church songs", while Josh's mother is a singer, and all the family play something. Are they looking forward to concerts, do they like playing to an audience?

"As long as it's not too big," says Chris. "My friends ask me to play for

them," says Nathaniel, "and I enjoy that." "It's showing off, I suppose," says Josh.

In well under an hour Claire took them through half a dozen pieces, ranging from Beethoven to The Muppets to Lord of the Rings. Each one highlighted different aspects of fingering, dynamics, musical mood, which Claire dealt to with a touch at once firm and light. Several of the senior band sit in, Jamie Mackay on tuba, Natalie Hormann on horn, cornettist Wayne Kedzlie and Courtney Hildreth on flugel, as well as director Steven Booth on baritone horn. They quietly point out details to the youngsters nearby.

There's a programme of recruitment for the new year, and the possibility of new premises, too, adjoining the Glen Eden Playhouse. The present hall was built for the band in 1954, but they keep moving the railway closer and closer. Besides, the senior band is already approaching 30-strong, and a little more space would help. I was able to hear them start rehearsal, and was reminded that while brass band music can sound good on radio or CD, there's a mellow power that only really shows when you hear it live.



Aniva-Storm Feau and Chris Lijzenga



Josh Singleton (with red trumpet)



Nathaniel Moody

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