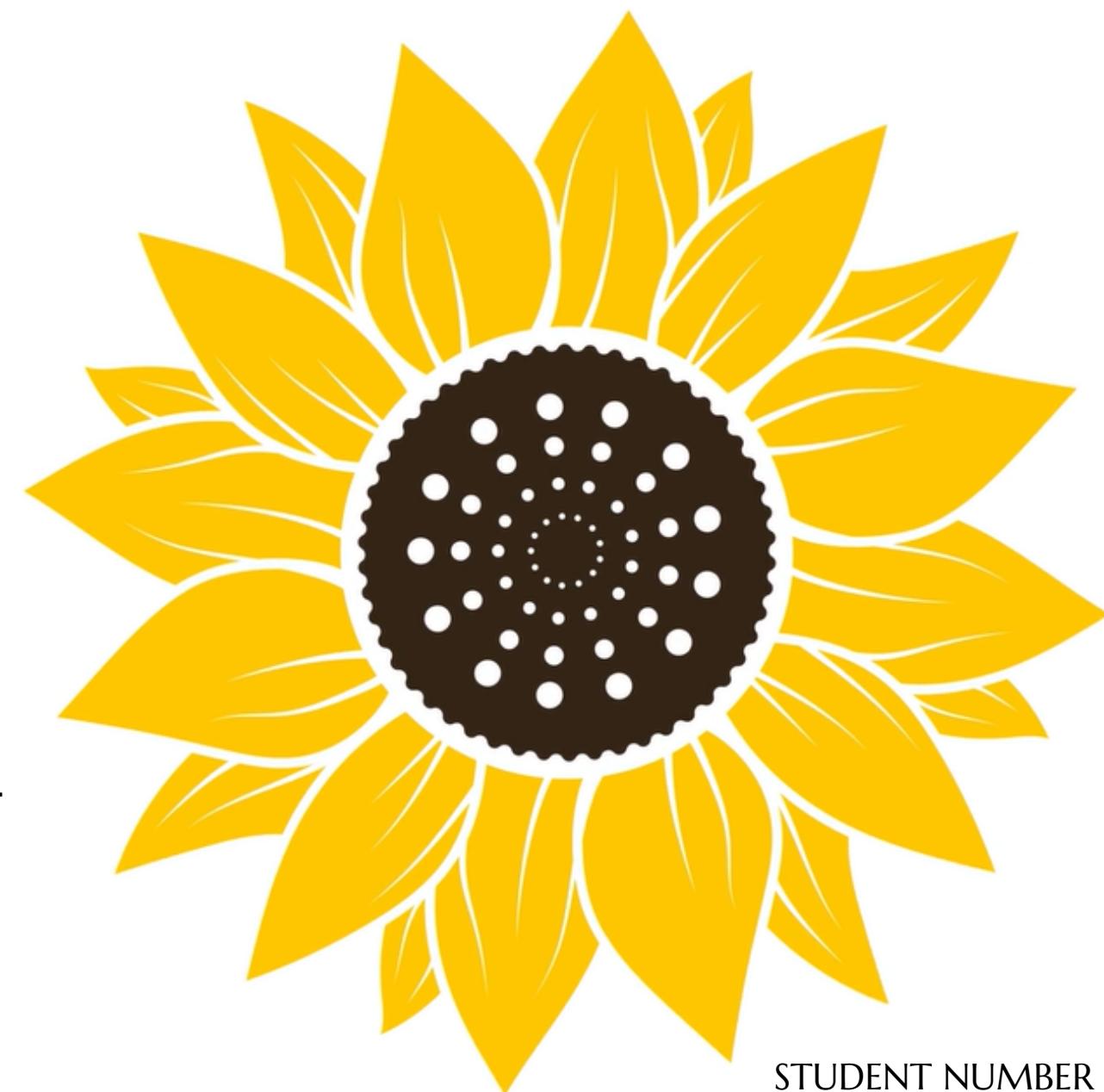




# EMMA FLYNN



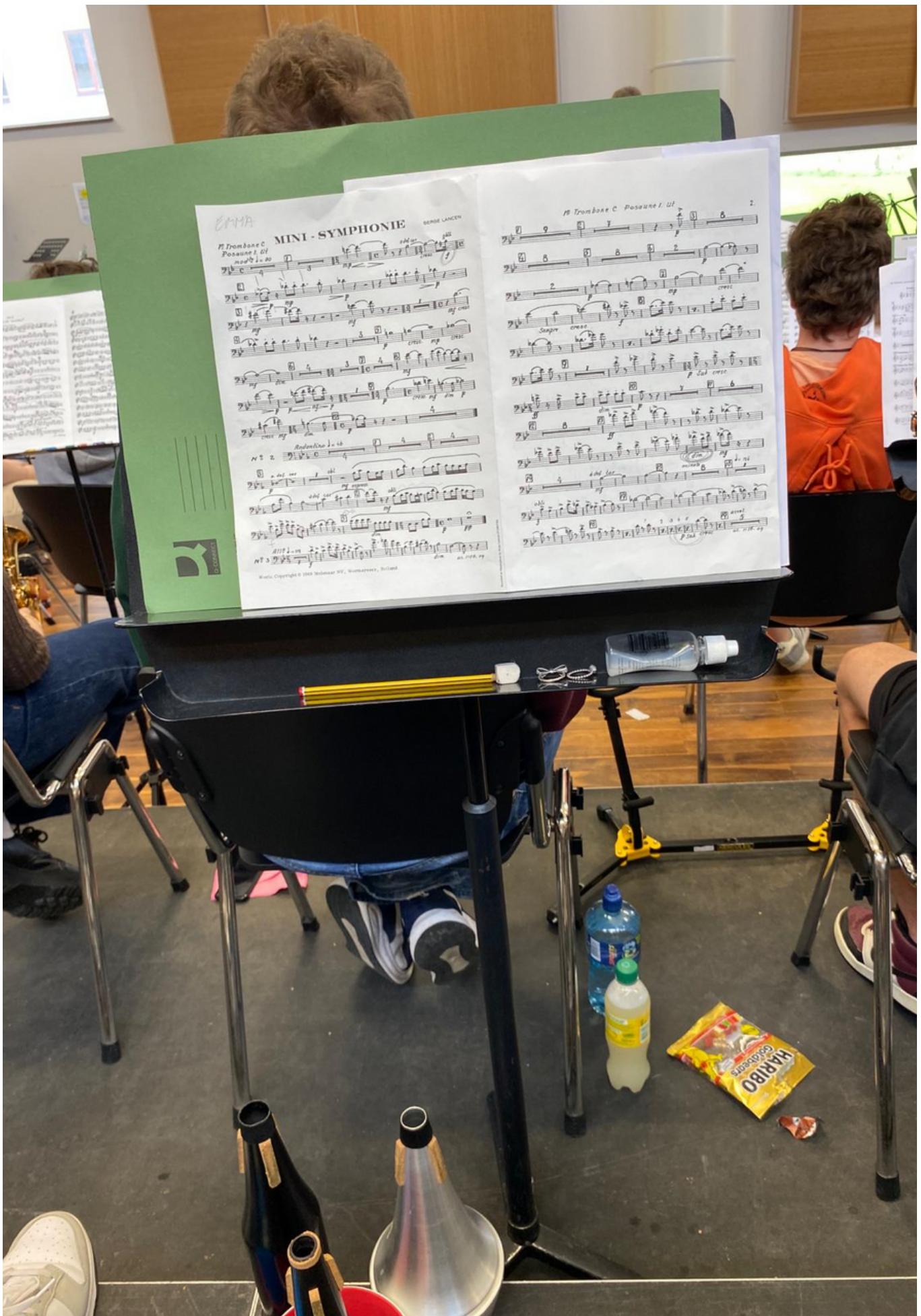
**Uaneen  
Award**

STUDENT NUMBER :

20412954

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# Uaneen Award

## UANEEN AWARD - LOG OF ACTIVITIES

<b>Your Name:</b>	EMMA FLYNN	<b>Student No:</b>	20412954
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No.	Club / Society / Organisation	Start Date	End Date	Total duration of involvement	Your Role	Brief summary of your involvement	Paid / Unpaid
1.	Artane School of Music	2013	present	11 years and ongoing	Trombonist	I receive trombone lessons at the Artane School of Music. I have completed all my Grades (Grades 1-8) with ABRSM, and I am currently studying for my Performance Diploma in Trombone from Trinity College London. This includes lessons every week and hours of individual practice.	Unpaid
2.	Artane Senior Band	2020	present	4 years and ongoing	Trombonist	I play first trombone with the Artane Senior Band. We rehearse a wide range of repertoire on Tuesday nights for 2 hours in preparation for various gigs and concerts throughout the year.	Unpaid
3.	Dublin Concert Band	2022	present	2 years and ongoing	Trombonist	I attend rehearsals with DCB on Thursdays and Sundays for 2 hours each. The repertoire is very difficult and requires a lot of concentration and commitment. I feel very challenged here. There is a very busy calendar with lots to prepare for, we compete in a lot of competitions as well as perform in concerts.	Unpaid

No.	Club / Society / Organisation	Start Date	End Date	Total duration of involvement	Your Role	Brief summary of your involvement	Paid / Unpaid
4.	Trinity Orchestra	2022	present	1 year and ongoing	Trombonist	Trinity Orchestra didn't have any trombone players in 2023. Coming up to concerts I would be contacted to join them as their principal trombone. Orchestral playing is completely different to the other bands I am involved in given the presence of string instruments. Their repertoire is much more classical and often requires me to read in different clefs. I have played with them for their annual concerts and at Forbidden Fruit Festival. I will rehearse with them on the Tuesday nights coming up to the concerts.	Unpaid
5.	Teaching -Artane School of Music -Finglas Concert Band -Exploring Music Together (RIAM)	2021	present	3 years and ongoing	Recorder Teacher and Trombone Teacher	I taught an Outreach programme in 2021. I taught recorder in 2 primary schools to their 3rd class students. I taught them everything from how to play the recorder to music reading skills. Together, we mastered 3 pieces which they performed in a public concert at the Artane School of Music where I was their conductor.  I was the trombonist in a programme called 'Exploring Music Together' in the Royal Irish Academy of Music. It was a summer camp for neurodivergent children, with engaging activities like an 'instrument petting zoo'. I showed them the trombone and a plastic trombone was provided for them to try. I then performed as part of a Brass Quintet consisting of other brass instruments for the children to hear.  I fill in trombone teaching for my teacher and other trombone teachers I know. In Finglas Concert Band, I have been filling in for majority of weeks and providing the students with guidance as they prepare for their official performance exams.	Paid
6.	Artane Band	2013	2021	8 years	Trombonist	I played trombone with the Artane Band, this is where I started my music journey. This consisted of rehearsals twice a week, a sectional and individual lessons. In the summer seasons we would play in Croke Park in the parade before every match (mens and womens) and at half time. We had many gigs at the weekends all over Ireland and travelled to Belfast, Glasgow, and Liverpool. I was section leader in my later years there and in 2021 I was valedictorian at our Graduation.	Unpaid
7.	Various Music Courses	2020	present	4 years and ongoing	Trombonist	Irish Youth Wind Ensemble Adult Youth Orchestra of Ireland Irish Symphonic Wind Orchestra Navan Silver Band Steadfast Band Fermanagh/Tyrone Brass Band Summer School Elastic Band	Unpaid



# Introduction



**Uaneen  
Award**

As a trombone player with over a decade of experience, there are many skills that I have acquired, but also many challenging situations I have had to overcome. I started playing trombone at the age of 11 in the Artane School of Music. I have no recollection of asking my mother to bring me up to the band but apparently I did, I find this interesting, perhaps fate? I have such a love for my instrument and funny enough, didn't even choose it myself. I was assessed in Artane on a few different instruments and they decided the trombone was the instrument for me. I can confidently say that I wouldn't choose any other instrument. I didn't know what to expect from this music journey but embarking on it was the best decision I have ever made.

**The 4 competencies I will be exploring in this reflection are :**

Leadership

Effective communication

Adaptability

Self-evaluation and reflection

I discovered that these four competencies which I honed through playing the trombone, also apply to my everyday life, especially my college life and learning experiences.

# Janeen Award



## Leadership

Over the past few years, I dedicated a lot of individual practice and attended various courses to become a more skilled musician. My primary goal was self-improvement, but this was driven by a desire to excel beyond peers in my section. I felt a strong sense of potential in myself. My teachers and mentors over the years had told me that I was a promising young musician. This also gave me a drive of sorts to prove to them that they were right. I think subconsciously I felt like if I didn't achieve great things in music that I would be letting them down. I think maybe I should've been dedicating this hard work and effort for myself and not for others. But I don't necessarily think this was a bad thing, looking back it was a good motivator for me at the time.

I believe that gaining these musical skills and an immense amount of experience gave me a small sense of entitlement. To be honest, I am still reflecting on the validity of these feelings I experienced and still experience. I know I am a good trombone player but never want to seem cocky when asked about it, but I justify it by telling myself that I worked hard to put myself in this position and skill level, so I feel as though I have the right to be proud of myself. I don't want others to think I am bragging, but I don't like to undersell myself. I have found that my skills and practice are seen and heard through my playing, which ultimately says everything without me needing to even use words.

When put in the leadership position, I knew I had to rise to the challenge in the appropriate manner. I have been elected as first chair of many different ensembles since starting college but the one I learnt the most from was the Irish Youth Wind Ensemble 2022. I was really pleased that the conductor and teachers had faith in me and trusted me with this role despite it being my first year in the ensemble. I was determined to do a great job. I felt confident leading from my many years of playing experience and being section leader in the Artane Band at a young age. However, I originally found adjusting to the leadership role quite difficult and challenging. I had to consider other people's opinions and so I thought long and hard about how I could be a good leader without being a dictator. It was important to me to be approachable and guide with respect at its core. I believe it is extremely important to treat everyone equally and with respect. Furthermore, through research, it became clear to me that the ethic of respect guides everything. For effective leadership to be maintained the environment of mutual respect is the foundation. (Bathurst and Ladkin, 2012)



2019 : Premiering the new  
Artane Band Uniform in the  
National Concert Hall

# Janeen Award



Leading in a music setting put me in quite a situational leadership role. I quickly realized that I would need to assess each situation and choose the most appropriate leadership style. I like being the section leader as it makes me feel trusted and I believe with all my years of experience and hard work that I am a good choice for the position. This also means playing first chair which is the most interesting music part and often has solos. This was the primary reason I was so happy to be section leader, but I quickly discovered that I actually love being a leader.

Something that was difficult to understand was that everyone plays music for different reasons. I couldn't understand why only certain people put a large amount of work and practice into their instrument. It soon became apparent to me that everyone isn't motivated by the same things, some people just want to play for enjoyment not to be 'the best'. From reflecting on times when I was under other leaders, especially in the Artane Band when I was a child, I remembered the importance of perspective and collaboration. When I was around 13, the trombone section leader could be quite arrogant and impatient with the younger players. I really didn't want the players in my section to feel this way about me. Being approachable and helpful are very important traits I want to lead by in music. I wanted to become a great leader because if a leader is efficient at leading, success with a common goal is more likely. (Sutherland and Cartwright, 2022)

I understand that it can hurt those around me if I am leading authoritatively without taking them into consideration. I found authoritative leadership to be more beneficial and suitable in high pressure and performance settings but that a more collaborative approach is more suitable in rehearsals for sightreading or learning music for the first time. Everyone in the section adjusts to these changes well and agree that it is the most suitable method for rehearsals and performances. It makes working together so much easier when we are all on the same page, I am grateful for that.



2019 : Myself in the Artane  
Band

IYWE was the most perfect leadership experience as it is a tough ensemble to get into with application requirements and auditions. I really wanted to be there, similar to the other players and was so excited about the opportunity. It was a wonderful section full of enthusiasm and brilliant players that made leading them a breeze.

After IYWE 2022, many more music opportunities fell in my lap, where I found myself as section leader time and time again with different people in different places. I despise drama and would hate anyone to think I was mean or condescending, so I decided to improve my collaborative leadership skills in the event of this happening. I planned ahead because I really did not want this to happen. I reflected on section leaders I have been under and their strengths and weaknesses. I noticed weaknesses in these leaders with attributes like losing patience and talking down to others in a condescending way. I established their strengths of listening and treating everyone equally with the professionalism of a section leader while not having a hierarchy divide.

I realized that I love helping others and get great enjoyment going through sheet music that other people found hard, I really enjoy being able to share my skills that I learnt with others.

I realize now that situational leadership better suits groups as there is a better sense of autonomy amongst players. I learnt it is entirely possible for work to get done being an approachable and inclusive leader. It was a valuable learning experience for me. When considering future career paths, many of them would require leadership and people skills. I am now confident that the skills I have acquired through music will be of benefit to me in my future.



IYWE 2022

## Effective communication



I get a great feeling of anxiety in an ensemble when none of us are working together. In situations like this, I have found that communication is the most important element. Through playing in different ensembles with different ages and ranges of skill level, I understand that these are universal feelings. I have had a lot of experience with ineffective communication. I have been the frustrated player where others are unsure of what they are doing or unpracticed, but I have been on the receiving end too, being the unsure and inexperienced player. I think having the understanding from both viewpoints gives me a moral obligation to use these experiences to help others. I think all newer musicians will experience that nervous feeling when being the unsure and inexperienced player but it is important to me to make sure that experience is as little stress as possible for them. This frustration would happen to me with sightreading. Sightreading is playing a piece of music that you have never seen before.

I have been made feel inferior by people talking down to me in rehearsals. As much as these comments upset me, they have made me practice harder and given me a thicker skin for such feedback. I vowed to myself to never put myself in a situation under-prepared, or where someone would have to point out my lack of practice. I prefer the more ‘constructive advice’ type of communication better. I actually don’t mind being critiqued. I know it will make me improve as a player and I appreciate any feedback I can get, I try to just view it as a part of my learning journey. I think the ‘constructive advice’ type is ideal and this has transferred over to the way I would give feedback to others in my section or players younger than me. It lets me know what I need to change but delivers it in a way that makes me still feel valued.

When I started in DCB in 2022, I was nervous and anxious as I knew nobody, and the parts were complex and difficult. However, one individual in the section always offered me the constructive type of advice. This made me feel valued in the section, but that he cared about me improving and the overall performance of the section. I really value supportive feedback and I feel as though it adds to the sense of community within the organisation. It empowers me to give the same type of feedback back to the music community. I find it easier to improve when I’m made aware of what I am doing wrong but also offered help on how to fix it. I always get frustrated when I can hear something in the ensemble that is wrong, and nobody says anything. I am grateful that my section leaders are outspoken about this. I have learnt to be open to criticism because I know it will help me improve.



# Uaneen Award



I find this an extremely valuable way of learning. I am a very quick learner and will fix the issue as soon as I am made aware of it. Understanding the way I like to be criticized has helped me with others.

When offering feedback to a player, I make it my duty to also show them how to fix it as I have learnt that this is an effective way of communicating. I have found that just addressing the problem doesn't really help the error, that offering help on how to fix it is just as, if not more important. I found through research, that for effective feedback to be given, it should be given in a way that avoids repetitive comments that merely identify errors, but instead provide a clear indication to the player about 'where to next.' (McPherson, Blackwell and Hattie, 2022) This is an attribute I admire from our section leader in DCB, he always provides the 'where to next' so we can all improve with ease. My DCB section leader really helps the music learning of the organisation and I could easily see how effective this communication was. I found it beneficial focusing on the positives this had for me and the rest of the section. This motivated me to not only improve my playing skills but my leadership skills too. I am constantly learning from him, it is such a rewarding experience.

However, something to remember is that communication isn't always this easy. In a performance or concert, I have found communication to be much more difficult as we cannot speak to one another. 'Verbal interaction among performers before a live performance is important for an ensemble in practice session'. (Kawase 2014). I will feel more comfortable in a live performance after we have all communicated beforehand in rehearsals and even established nonverbal cues for the performance itself. I have found that it makes a performance so much easier in comparison to ensembles where this prior communication is not established. I have found the difference evident, and a sense of uncertainty is created among the group.



IYWE Artane players 2023



In November 2021, I had one of the most memorable and special moments of my Artane Band journey. My peers nominated me as Valedictorian for our Artane Band Graduation. I was over the moon. The Artane Band always play at band graduations, and I recalled the years of sitting in the band, listening to past valedictorians' speeches, aspiring to be that person on our graduation day. I was nervous. I have no problem speaking in front of groups of people, in fact I quite enjoy it. On the other hand, delivering a speech was new territory for me, and I couldn't help but feel nervous over the significance of the occasion. I spent time writing my speech, including memories, and thanking our wonderful conductor and mentors. I spoke slowly and clearly as I knew this was important and I felt at ease when I started my speech. I was thrilled when my jokes got laughs from my fellow graduates and one of the girls even teared up. I was so proud of myself. I learnt so much about myself this night. I really enjoy public speaking and I feel like I was on a high after it. I feel like this is one of the most valuable skills I am carrying into my future.



# Adaptability



Janeen  
Award

Being an adaptable player has opened so many doors for me in the music world. I have always read the trombone in bass clef, which is essentially the language of music I am reading in. I then had to learn treble clef and tenor clef, which was like learning 2 new languages. It was a significant challenge, as the tenor clef navigates up to the high register and the treble clef is completely different notation placement. Navigating and mastering 3 of the 4 music clefs was a big challenge. However, this was worth all the hard work despite certain rehearsals where I was thrown in the deep end reading a different clef that I wasn't used to. I am so glad I decided to learn these as many opportunities have risen for me to play in different ensembles and improve my musical repertoire.

I realized that to play in an orchestra I would need to read tenor clef and to play in a brass band I would need to read treble clef. I remember being a 12-year-old girl and my teacher mentioning that if I wanted to play trombone seriously that I would need to learn to read in other clefs. I remember feeling terrified because it felt so out of reach to me. However, when the time came, I was motivated and willing to put the hard work in for such opportunities and results. Despite finding the practice challenging, I endured and did my best to learn through individual practice. I also learnt from those around me in more high-pressure ensemble settings. I always utilize the tools available to me and the people around me. I was hesitant to put myself in situations where I lacked experience in reading these clefs. On the other hand, I knew that to achieve the goals and outcomes that I deeply desired, I would have to push myself into situations that were challenging for me.



BASS CLEF



TREBLE CLEF



TENOR CLEF



Trinity Orchestra 2022



I learnt that I was well capable of learnings these clefs and I was so excited by the prospective opportunities that were available to me. I felt proud of myself and made sure to remember that I had originally thought this goal was inaccessible. I thought back on all the times that teachers and mentors went on and on about how important practice is and I am so glad that all my hard work paid off. I must be adaptable to the type of ensemble I am playing in as well as what clef I am reading in.

My best friend, a saxophone player, whose mother is a musician has said that anyone she has spoken to about me has always said something along the lines of ‘oh we love Emma’ or ‘I love when Emma plays with us’. I want to be an amazing musician, but I also want people to enjoy having me there and not only because I am a good player. From talking to others in the music industry I understand being a skilled player is not the only important trait to have. Social skills are equally as important. I was interested by this as I love socializing and meeting new people and wanted to know how valuable this could be to me in the industry. I analysed a study of 20 participants from a major, self-governing symphony orchestra in London. Most participants identified social or interpersonal skills when asked about the skills and qualities required for orchestral work. Getting on with people, having a sense of humor and a good/positive attitude was also stressed. (Dobson and Gaunt, 2015)

I can honestly say that I find this so exciting. Most of my closest friends I have met through music, the shared passion and love for a common goal are friendships that feel so special. The courses I attend are not just musical learning experiences but an inviting environment where I have made some of the most important relationships in my life.

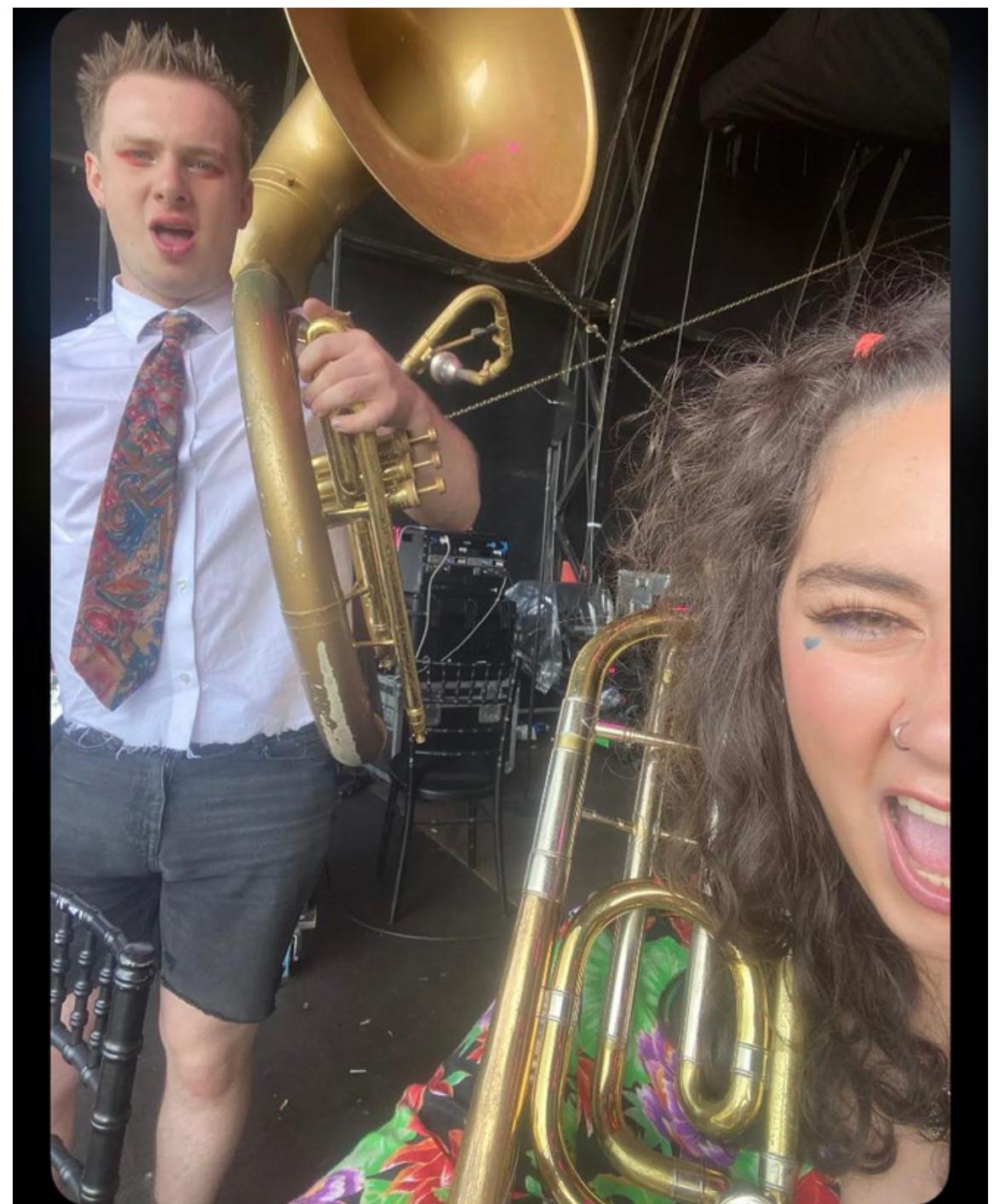




## Forbidden Fruit with Trinity Orchestra 2023

When I was asked to play with Trinity Orchestra, I felt exposed and nervous. I had never played in an orchestra before and didn't want to waste such an amazing opportunity. It was so important to me to make a good impression. I practiced the music the night before the rehearsal which made me feel more at ease and offered me a small sense of safety. I knew if I hadn't looked at the music beforehand that I would've felt very nervous. Once we played through the pieces once in the rehearsal, I settled in. I can't lie and say that the rehearsal wasn't high pressure. I was on first trombone, so I was section leader with a group of people I didn't know. But my performance with them at that concert meant that I got asked back to play with them at 'Forbidden Fruit' a music festival that I had always wanted to attend, not even as a musician.

When I went to play with Hibernian Orchestra, I didn't have the music beforehand and I felt quite anxious as it is a very highly rated orchestra. I wasn't going to turn down the opportunity. Through my experience and what I learnt in Trinity Orchestra, I found it less daunting. I had already gone into an orchestra with people I didn't know and placed on first trombone with parts that were difficult and required extreme concentration. It was made easier for me as I could transfer these skills of new learning and learning on the spot over to Hibernian Orchestra. It wasn't even a mindset or an approach I had to be conscious of, it was like my previous experience just transferred over to the new orchestra without me needing to be focused on it. I was grateful to be there in an orchestra of such a high standard. I have been utilizing my adaptability skills and I can sense my confidence growing. I'm also finding it increasingly seamless to transition between them due to my ongoing experience.



# Self-evaluation and reflection

I was distraught after my IYWE audition in 2020. I felt I could've played better, and I fully believed I had blown the opportunity. I was stressed the morning of the audition because when I played through my pieces, I didn't like how they sounded, and I ended up going into the audition a nervous wreck. I was so surprised when I got a letter in the post informing me that I had gotten a place in the ensemble. It made me realize that I am more than capable and that maybe I was too hard on myself. However personally, I still thought that I didn't give the best audition that I could have. IYWE 2020 was cancelled due to Covid and didn't take place in 2021. In March 2022, I auditioned for IYWE again. I was practicing my audition pieces every day and I was feeling more prepared and more confident for the audition.

Reflecting on this journey, especially my IYWE 2020 audition, I couldn't ignore the part played by my self-esteem in preparation the morning of the audition and the audition itself. 'Lack of self-esteem can manifest itself as extreme anxiety and stage-fright which can damage the chance of success at an audition.' (Noden, 2017). Reading that made me feel a small bit better as I knew this wasn't a feeling only, I experienced. I knew my emotions were valid. I found it beneficial to reflect on my feelings from that day and try to understand what went wrong, to ensure that my IYWE 2022 audition would run smoothly.

Upon reflecting on my IYWE 2020 audition, it was clear I needed to master performing under pressure. I sought out opportunities to play in ensembles I had not played in before and read music I hadn't seen. I found these situations quite stressful at first as I was willingly putting myself under pressure, but I am glad I did. I spoke to my trombone teacher. Often, I find it hard to take someone's advice, especially with something so personal like trombone. For example, I couldn't believe it when he said not to play the full day before the audition and only warm up before. I was so certain that playing the day before my audition would be essential to wrap up all my practice for the best result in the audition. However, I decided to listen to him as I have a lot of trust in him. Playing in the audition was much easier and I felt much more comfortable and I am so grateful to have this knowledge going forward for any audition or individual performance in my future. Once again, I felt this sense of community and the willingness of others to help me. I feel so supported by my teachers and mentors and I have really started to embrace their advice and feedback.

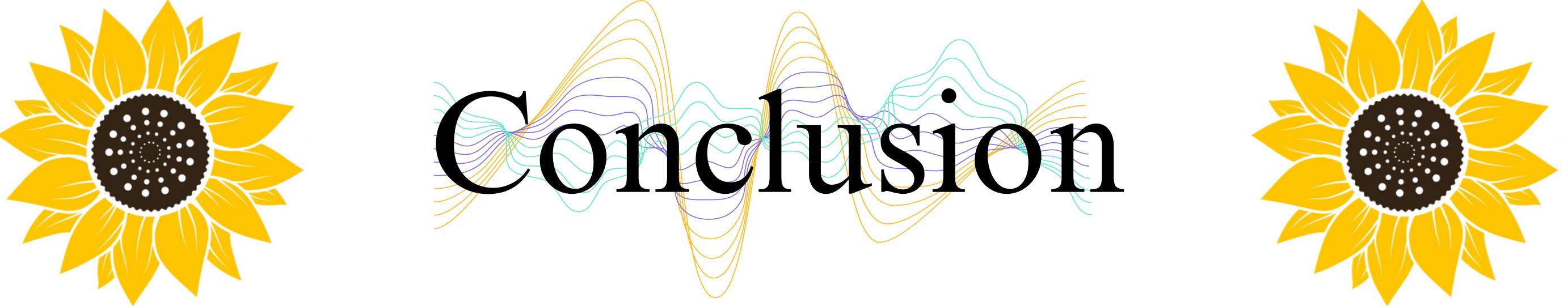
Coming up to an exam, audition, or important performance,  
I find it essential to reflect and self-evaluate.



Sightreading is a weakness that I had, and I was very self-conscious about it because it is one of the most valuable skills a musician can have. I reflected on the ways I improved my other weaknesses and decided that practice would help me again. I started playing pieces at home that I had never seen before to make it easier sightreading in rehearsals. Now I don't get as nervous when sightreading, but I know I still have a lot to learn. The difference now is that this excites me instead of scares me. I think this is going to be a very valuable and invigorating learning experience. I am hopeful it will help me achieve more in my studies because I have found that there is a positive relationship between academic achievement and sight-reading ability. (Galyen, 2005)

In a rehearsal, I hate feeling overwhelmed when sightreading a part. I make sure to remind myself that this isn't something I could've prepared for and that I won't feel this way the next time I see the piece. I analyse my part at home having noted the difficult sections during the rehearsal. While this can be difficult and time-consuming, I remind myself of the importance of being prepared and what I am doing it for. This creates a sense of excitement for me in the next rehearsal as I am excited to play the piece now knowing exactly what I need to do.

Through my experiences in different ensembles with a wide range of repertoire I think I have matured as a player and as a person. I have been able to identify my weaknesses, reflect on them and draw up an action plan on how to go forward and overcome them. I identified what skills needed improvement and what skills I needed to attain too. These have all made me a much stronger player and a better listener and team player. They have made me a tenacious individual. There have actually never been days where I have asked myself, 'what am I doing all this for?' because I have no doubt in my mind that I want to play trombone and experience all that music has ahead for me.



# Conclusion

In August of 2023, I had an accident which left my wrist in a cast, and I was unable to play trombone for around 10 weeks. I discovered a lot about myself in this period and I realized how much music really meant to me. Time slowed down and without all the rehearsals and gigs I had a great amount of time to think about my life and the reason I am doing these things. The emotions I experienced of being out of trombone was awful. I missed it so much. I reflected on how trombone is the only hobby I have and how I put so much of my time and effort into it that it isn't really a hobby anymore. But I still love it so much and I don't regret anything in the slightest. I was so eager to play again and this told me all I needed to know. I realized that I am so glad and so proud of myself for all the work I had put in over the years. I was able to take part in courses and gigs with peers that study music full time in college and I only practice outside college. I can confidently say that I don't wish there was anything else I had done over the years. The hard work I dedicated paid off and honestly, I found the hard work enjoyable. When I played again, at Forbidden Fruit, it was fantastic. I felt like the huge part of me that had to be neglected was brought back to me. I knew that I would play trombone for the rest of my life, whether professional or as an amateur, and whichever path of this I take, I know I will enjoy.

Deep down trombone and being in ensembles has taught me a lot about myself. It has helped me realize what type of career I would like to pursue. It has taught me invaluable life lessons and skills. I have established that I am a social butterfly. I know I am meant to be a trombone player and this music allows this social butterfly in me to flourish too.



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