

Meet the Tutors



Chief Musical Director - Billy Middleton

Billy has enjoyed a long and varied career path in music. Although an orchestral musician at heart, Billy has played in brass bands, first in Scotland, where he was born and now here in New Zealand he continues to support the brass band movement as a performer and conductor. Having spent some years in military bands in South Africa, he was then appointed Principal Tuba in one of the top orchestras, and was able to live his dream performing masterpieces by his favourite composer, Mahler. Billy conducted the ABA camp in 2014 and we are extremely fortunate to secure this talented musician once again for our 2016 camp.



Camp Co-Ordinator - Kay MacKenzie

Kay MacKenzie has been the Youth Co-Ordinator for the annual ABA Camp since 2012. She performs Soprano Cornet with Dalewood Auckland Brass and is the current National Champion on this instrument.

"Music Camps were an inspiration to me growing up in Scotland, and they really fuelled my passion to reach for my potential. The friendships I made were all part of this process - we got our energy from each other and meeting people from the wider community was always a great way to appreciate the talents out there and learn from one other. There is so much potential in Auckland to grow and develop our youth, and I am privileged to be part of a great association like the ABA so I am in a position to be able to help to provide more musical opportunities for our youth."



Musical Director - Robert Simpson

Robert Simpson is currently deputy musical director of North Shore Brass. Rob has been involved with brass bands since primary school, and made his first National Youth Brass Band on Euphonium at the age of 14, remaining a member for 8 consecutive bands. Rob studied composition, performance and conducting at the University of Auckland, and has performed with a diverse range of groups from the National Opera Chorus, orchestras and wind bands to rock, funk and jazz combos; on instruments from Euphonium, Trombone and Keyboard, to log drums and the concert bass drum.



Cornet Tutor - Grant Langdon

Currently Conducting Waitakere Auckland Brass, Grant holds a Trumpet and

Conducting Performance degree from Auckland University, and has a wealth of experience playing in Brass Bands, Orchestras, and Big Bands. As a Soloist, he has been placed regularly in the Flugelhorn Solo at the Nationals. Grant is equally at home in Big Bands and Jazz groups, and has also played in the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, and Opus Chamber Orchestra. He has recorded for Television and Radio, and has played with and for International Artists including; Bobby Shew, Bill Reichenbach, Shirley Bassey, Kiri Te Kanawa, and John Rowles. As a Secondary School music teacher, Grant is especially interested in seeing today's youth experience the joy of playing music. Youth camps are great places to develop skills, make new friends, and learn from and with mentors.



Cornet Tutor - Kate Wright

Kate is the Flugelhorn player for North Shore Brass. She currently works as an itinerant tutor at Kings Preparatory school in Remuera, and is particularly skilled in working with our young musicians who newbies to brass banding.

Pictured above: Kate encouraging the newbies at ABA Camp 2014



Lower Brass Tutor-Ken Cant

Ken is the principal Euphonium player for Dalewood Auckland Brass. He has a wealth of experience and background performing in the heart of UK banding with the famous Fodens and Yorkshire Imperial Brass Bands. Ken is the conductor of the seven times champion youth band, North Shore Youth.

Pictured above: Ken and the North Shore Youth Brass at the ABA Band Contest 2015

Percussion Tutor - Jennifer Raven

Jenny Raven is Sub-principal Percussion with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. She started in brass bands and has kept close links with Banding throughout her career. Tutoring in many schools, bands and playing in many professional groups she is always keen to help younger players improve their skills.



Horn Tutor- Steve Foster

Steve Foster started playing tenor horn in Yorkshire, UK, where he was trained by the great British Cornet player, James Shepherd. He progressed to playing in several championship section bands in the UK, the best known being Desford Colliery, on both horn and Euphonium.

Steve moved to New Zealand in 2006 and put his playing career on hold until a chance meeting with Euphonium veteran Graeme Gillies brought him back into the fold as the youngest player of the Kumeu Vintage Band. Steve joined Northshore Brass shortly after and plays 1st Horn. Steve also sings and plays bass guitar in his covers band, Mach III.



Trombone Tutor - Mark Close

Mark grew up in Christchurch, where he was active as a trombonist in both brass bands and orchestras. During his career, Mark has played with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, the Wellington Regional Orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Central Band of the RNZAF. After studying in the United States during 1994, including attending the Music Academy of the West, Mark returned in 1995 to take up the position of 2nd trombone with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, of which he is now sub-principal. Mark is also the conductor of Kumeu Brass Band, a founding member of the BonaNZa trombone quartet as well as an active brass tutor in Auckland.