



NEW VENTURES ***“Music For Life”***

Presentation to: Municipal Community Grants Committee meeting for the Town of Cobourg
Monday December 7, 2020
Prepared by Glenn Bailey
Founder and Music Director
Northumberland New Ventures Band

The Northumberland New Ventures Band was formed in February 2014 with an initial membership numbering 36 adults. Since that time, we have steadily grown each year, reaching just under 100 members by the fall of 2019. This growth has far exceeded any expectations following my brief announcement and call for interested people to join us on January 1st 2014 at the annual Mayor’s Levee. Our community’s continued, enthusiastic response to us has made us confident that the New Ventures Band will be here for many years to come.

One of our mandates is to offer adults in our community the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, regardless of their age, social economic status or musical experience. By the fall of 2019, over half of our performing members came to us with no musical experience whatsoever and were soon performing in our community on a regular basis. We regularly provide free performances for senior’s residences which remains an ongoing mandate for our organization as well. We truly believe that music is for life. Our youngest member is 36 with our eldest member being 90 years of age. Our average age is approximately 63 and they come to us from all walks of life. Each year, we conduct open house for new members and it continues to surprise the number of new faces we receive annually. Especially for the size of our community.

The New Ventures will be forever grateful for the support of ***The Concert Band of Cobourg*** in our early years. They allowed us to use their band facility and equipment for rehearsals at the D’Arcy St. location rent free. Perhaps more importantly, they provided us with an enormous amount of support and encouragement which was so valuable to us in the early years. However, by the fall of 2019, we had literally out grown their facility and were forced to find a larger rehearsal space which came in the Orange Hall at Ontario St. and University Ave in Cobourg. We signed a 5 year lease with an option of 5 more years in early March of 2020. Our monthly rent, which includes the band’s instrument storage, is \$1000.00 with an annual increase of 2% built in. By April 1st 2020, Covid-19 had effectively squashed our plans for our normally large bands to safely rehearse in our new home.

At our last public concert on November 30th 2019 (Christmas), the following groups performed for the public to a full house at Trinity United Church: our ***Mezzo Band*** (33 members of limited musical experience) under the direction of David Marshall, David also directed our ***Big Band*** (22 members). Under the direction of Glenn Bailey, the afternoon was capped off with our ***Avanti Band*** (experienced members numbering 56). The Avanti Band is substantially our original members. This is the band that performed the debut of the original composition ***“Victoria Park Overture”*** which was commissioned by the town of Cobourg for Canada’s 150th birthday celebrations. Our ***Intro Band*** (beginners) was preparing for their debut at our annual Venturing Forth, season ending June concert. This concert was of course cancelled due to Covid-19.

How has Covid-19 impacted us?

- 1) Loss of revenue which has created a \$4000+ budgeted shortfall for this year.
 - a) 3 public concerts were lost/cancelled. Our usual June 2020 and November 2020 concerts. We were also forced to cancel our 1st Big Band concert scheduled for May 2020. . Concerts are a large part of our normal revenue. Estimated loss \$5000 - \$6000.
 - b) Roughly half of our members were willing to pay their annual dues for the year 2020. This was understandably due various issues with us operating in this time of Covid. Most of these people plan to return to us once a vaccine is available.
- 2) Loss of performances for our local Senior's residences. Our Brass Quintet was able to perform at A couple of residences outside while the weather permitted.
- 3) The New Ventures Band remains much more that a collection of bands. We are indeed a very active social group for senior citizens, among others. Covid has effectively broken us up as a social group.

Some positives.

- We were able to stage a successful Garage Sale this fall and we are also selling Empire Cheese packages for the holiday season.
- Although the rental of the Orange Hall remains a fixed expense we are committed to, it's larger size has allowed us to rehearse small ensembles while maintaining social distance protocols during this fall and coming winter. These 8 smaller groups total only half of our normal membership. At least these members have been able to continue learning and the mandate of community music education for all remains honoured.
- We are presently in the process of recording an amateur Christmas DVD produced by these small groups. These free DVDs will be distributed to all our area senior's facilities within the next 2 weeks.
- Our monthly rent payments to the Orange Lodge will allow them to pay for some much needed repairs to the building as we are its only tenants at this time.