Musical Director

Cold Ash Brass is looking for a Musical Director with a clear musical vision for the band and a practical plan to achieve it. Our current MD is relocating at Christmas, and we're looking for someone to start in the new year and lead us into the Regional Championships in March and beyond.

The MD sets the band's musical goals, chooses the music we work on, and decides the seating of players. As well as rehearsing the band, you'll conduct and present our concerts and engagements throughout the year. You'll be comfortable working with players of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, and able to explain clearly where you want to take the band and how.

To succeed in the role, you'll get to know the strengths and weaknesses of the players in your charge, and use that to help every section, and every player, improve. Strong candidates combine musical ambition with a realistic sense of what an amateur band can achieve in a year, and can work within a modest budget to give our audiences the best possible entertainment.

About Us

Cold Ash Brass was formed in 2003 in the village of Cold Ash. We've always had strong links with Thatcham and in 2022 moved to a larger rehearsal hall in the town. We give between six and eight concerts a year, including our annual Thatcham Festival concert, Remembrance Sunday, and Christmas concerts and playouts. Our concerts are well attended and we have a loyal local following.

We compete in the Regional Championships each year in the 4th section. For us, the contest is as much about improving our musicianship as the result, and the chance to work in real depth on one piece at the start of each year.

Musical Vision and Planning

We want an MD who can tell us where they want to take the band and how they'll get there. In practice, that means:

- Setting clear musical goals for the year, shared with the band and committee at the start of each year
- Planning each term's rehearsals with a clear purpose, so players know what each one is working towards
- Using sectionals and focused work to raise the standard of individual sections
- Building player engagement and commitment, so players want to be at every rehearsal and stay with the band for the long term
- Reviewing progress with the committee and section leaders each term, and adjusting the plan as needed
- Explaining seating and musical decisions openly, so players understand them

Roles and Responsibilities

- To set the musical direction of the band and uphold its aims and objectives in line with the constitution
- To conduct the band, or arrange a deputy

- To provide leadership for band members and support section leaders
- To encourage players to develop the full range of their musical abilities
- To finalise concert programmes and share them with players at least three weeks before each concert
- To attend and report to committee meetings
- To work with the Librarian on buying new music and keeping folders up to date (pads are usually refreshed each term)
- To support section leaders in finding deputy players
- To work with the Secretary on player availability for engagements

Requirements

- Excellent knowledge of music technique, theory and performance
- Strong organisational, interpersonal and communication skills
- Strong leadership and time management
- The ability to give clear instructions and make decisions under pressure
- Available for weekly rehearsals on Thursdays, 7.30pm to 9.30pm

Expenses

£50 per weekly rehearsal, plus £50 per extra engagement, paid as expenses. The appointment is reviewed with the committee every two years.

Safeguarding and Diversity

Cold Ash Brass follows Brass Bands England's best practice on safeguarding, and any appointment will be expected to uphold those standards, as set out in our safeguarding statement at coldashbrass.org.uk/commitments. The role is subject to an enhanced DBS check with barred list, and we'll ask for two referees who know your musical background.

We're committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in brass banding, and we'd particularly welcome applicants from backgrounds that are underrepresented in banding.

Process

Please email a conducting or music CV to secretary@coldashbrass.org.uk, with a short outline of no more than one page covering:

- Where you'd take the band musically over the next year or two
- How you'd build player engagement and commitment, including attendance and keeping players
- How you'd approach your first term, including Regionals in March

Applications to be submitted by the Sunday 20th December. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to take a full two-hour rehearsal on a Thursday evening. with auditions commencing in January. The committee will then make the appointment, taking the band's views into account.