



Manningham Concert Band musical director Andrew van Gemert leading his band.

Picture: KRIS REICHL, N420T101

# All in for a sound achievement

By Monique Bouma

**A** LOVE of sharing music and making people happy is what ties the members of the increasingly popular Manningham Concert Band together, says musical director Andrew van Gemert.

Mr van Gemert celebrated 20 years with the band last month, and said many members had been with the band for 10 to 15 years.

"It's so pleasing to see such a cross-section of people, not only of age but of professions, too, get together every week and enjoy music," he said. "You can't ask for much more than that."

The band, formed in 1974, has an age range of 16 to 76, and includes university lecturers, tradespeople, office workers and students.

An Anzac Day concert, naturalisation ceremonies, Christmas carols, a gala concert in August, a series of Sunday afternoon concerts, and other private and community events are some of its many gigs.

Mr van Gemert said the band usually



Peter McClive plays the french horn.

attracted an audience of several hundred, and numbers were increasing.

"Certainly the audience is growing for us," he said. "Our most popular gig is the Christmas carols, where about 8000 to 10,000 people turn up. I think with the enthusiasm we have in the band, it can only get bigger and better."

Mr van Gemert joined the band in

1983 and became musical director in 1996.

He received the Victorian Bands League Merit Award for service to community music in 1992, and life membership of Manningham Concert Band in 1995.

He said the band received financial backing from Manningham Council, but members played at the community



The band, with Andrew van Gemert, performs for an audience.

concerts for the simple joy of bringing their music to others.

"The community service those members show to Manningham is really outstanding," he said.

"The people that are in the band aren't in the business of music.

"They've got their own professional lives, but they come because they love

music, and that sharing is most fulfilling.

"That's what keeps you going."

Despite strong membership, Mr van Gemert said the band was always looking for more musicians, particularly low brass players.

For more information, phone Elizabeth Vaughan on 9878 6592.



Manningham Concert Band members Jamie Baird on the trumpet (above), Shirley Clarke on the bass drum (left), and Peter Robb on the timpani (below). N420T101

