

**Meet Chris Mackey**  
**Musical Director**  
**The Progress Band**



1. What are your musical career highlights? How and when did it all start and is it true that you trained at Kneller Hall?

That's quite a question – I started playing a brass instrument at the age of seven. I was taught by my Dad who was the bandmaster of the local Salvation Army band. I auditioned and was accepted into the Regimental Band of the Welsh Guards at age 16. Yes – it's true I spent a year at Kneller Hall studying tuba with Patrick Harrild who is now with the London Symphony Orchestra.

I have been very fortunate during my musical career to date to have travelled as far a field as Japan and several tours to the USA. I have been very lucky to have met and worked with a number of outstanding musicians. I suppose some of my favourite memories are from the early 1990s when, having moved back to playing the trombone, I had several lessons from my ultimate musical hero, Don Lusher.

2. So you're a trombonist – what's so great about it? Why choose trombone?

That's easy. I come from a long line of trombone players. In fact, my Dad still plays. I grew up listening to recordings of Tommy Dorsey and Don Lusher. What's so great about it – I don't think you choose an instrument, I think the instrument chooses you and for me it was always the trombone!

3. What motivates you to be musical director of the Progress Band?

I was very lucky to be taught to play from such an early age and have grown to appreciate the opportunities I have had because of my playing and involvement with a variety of ensembles and great teachers that I want to pass on the knowledge I have acquired.

Also, I suppose it's a natural development for many trombonists – Denis Wick, Chris Dean, Ted Heath, the list is endless and that's not counting those who were also great arrangers such as Nelson Riddle. It must be something inherent in trombone players!

4. What would you like to achieve with Progress Band?

To help all its players achieve their full potential and, when my tenure as MD is over, leave a vibrant, enthusiastic and musically successful band.

5. How best would you describe your leadership style?

I think that's best answered by others!

6. What is your current most played album?

I have two types of recordings – those I listen to professionally and those I listen to for pleasure. Quite often they overlap. As I am currently preparing for a recital, I am listening to several recordings (by different performers) of the pieces I will be playing.

If I am listening for pleasure then I've been told that my taste in music is very eclectic! *Sinatra at the Sands* because Sinatra phrases like an instrumentalist which he would do as he learnt his singing style from....Tommy Dorsey!

7. Who or what inspires you to play?

My Dad inspired me to play and now I just love the trombone.

8. What are your 5 top tips for brass beginners?

In no particular order:

1. Get a good teacher
2. A secondhand pro-quality instrument is better than a shiny student one
3. Listen to as many different types of music as possible
4. Practice every day
5. Enjoy playing – by joining the Progress Band!