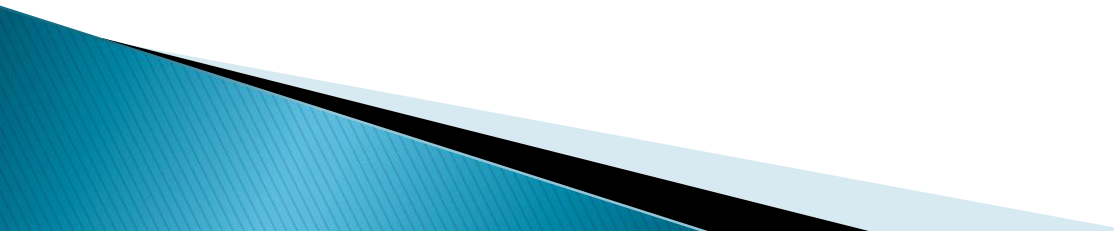


# BBL Questionnaire – Part 3

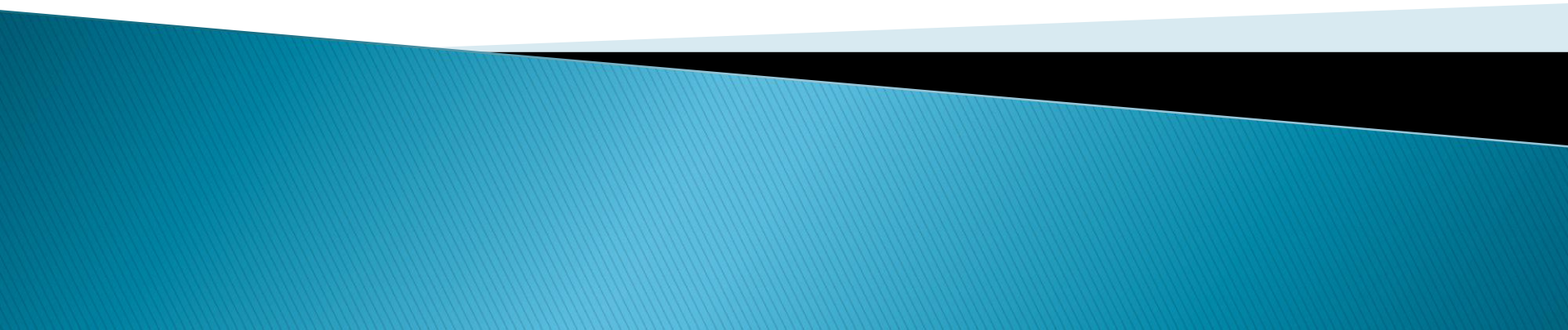
Contests

# Index

- ▶ Solos and Ensembles
  - ▶ Brass in Concert
  - ▶ Spring Festival
  - ▶ Festival of Brass
  - ▶ Venues
- 

# Solos and Ensembles

Malone Presbyterian Church Halls, Belfast



# Background

- ▶ Held once a year
- ▶ Generally second weekend in February (half term)
- ▶ Open to affiliated and unaffiliated players
- ▶ In 2020 the BBL provided an accompanist for all competitors in the youth solo classes

	Youth Entries	Senior Entries	Total Entries	Total Withdrawals	Total % Withdrawals	Number performing
2018	95	81	176	52	30	124
2019	82	64	146	47	32	99
2020	69	67	135	22	16	113

# Senior Solo Classes

## A Solo (Technical Class)

*Time limit not exceeding 12½ minutes, one piece only*

Own Choice

## B Solo (Technical Class)

*Time limit not exceeding 12½ minutes, one piece only*

*Restricted to players aged 20 and over*

Own Choice

## C Solo (Technical Class)

*Time limit not exceeding 12½ minutes, one piece only*

*Restricted to players from the 3<sup>rd</sup> section and below*

Own Choice

## 19 and Under Solos (Technical Class)

*For players Grade 5 standard and above*

*Time limit not exceeding 12½ minutes, one piece only*

Own Choice

## Slow Melody (Open)

Own Choice

A competitor can play in ONE of the technical classes (A, B or C) AND the Slow Melody class. A competitor playing in the 19 and Under class can also play in the Slow Melody class and ONE of the Youth solo classes.

# Senior Ensemble Classes

A Quartet (Open)

Own Choice

B Quartet

*Restricted to players from bands in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section and below*

Own Choice

Senior Ensemble A (Open)

*2-10 players, excluding quartets*

Own Choice

Senior Ensemble B

*2-10 players, excluding quartets*

*Restricted to Players from bands in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section and below*

Own Choice

Senior Ensemble C

*2-10 players, excluding quartets*

*Restricted to players from 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Section Bands*

Own Choice

Each Ensemble and Quartet is required to play only ONE piece but there is no time limit.

Each Ensemble is required to play 2 to 10 players EXCLUDING quartets. Any brass or percussion instrumentation is acceptable in both the Ensemble and Quartet classes.

# Youth Solo Classes

17 and Under Solo

Own Choice

15 and Under Solo

Selected Book

12 and Under Solo

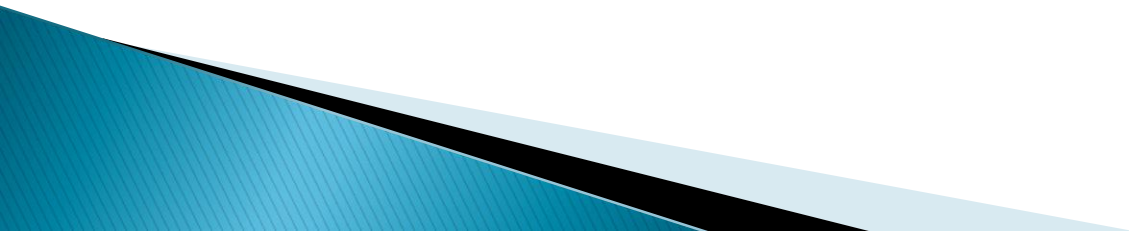
Selected Book

10 and Under Solo

Selected Book

Each competitor can compete in ONE Youth Solo class only but can compete in the Senior Solo classes as previously described.

All competitors in the 10, 12 and 15 and under classes are required to use the accompanist supplied by the BBL.



# Youth Solos – Selected Books

## **10, 12 and 15 and Under Solo**

The Young Soloist Volume One

Publisher: Studio Music

The Young Soloist Volume Two

Publisher: Studio Music

The Young Soloist Volume Three

Publisher: Studio Music

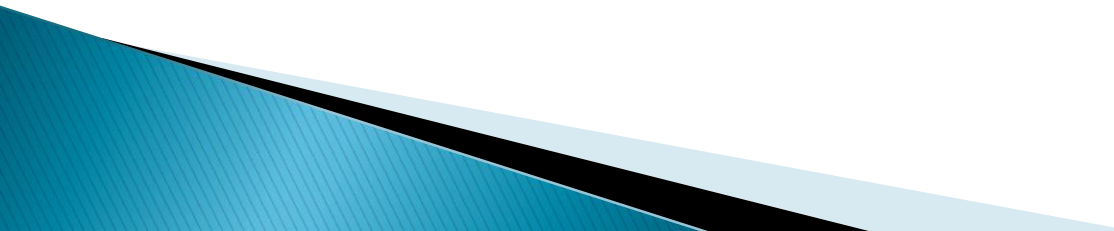
Winner Scores All (Peter Lawrance)

Publisher: Brass Wind

## **15 and Under Solo only**

Great Winners (Peter Lawrance)

Publisher: Brass Wind





# Youth Ensemble Classes

17 and Under Ensemble  
*Up to 12 players*

Own Choice

12 and Under Ensemble  
*Up to 12 players*

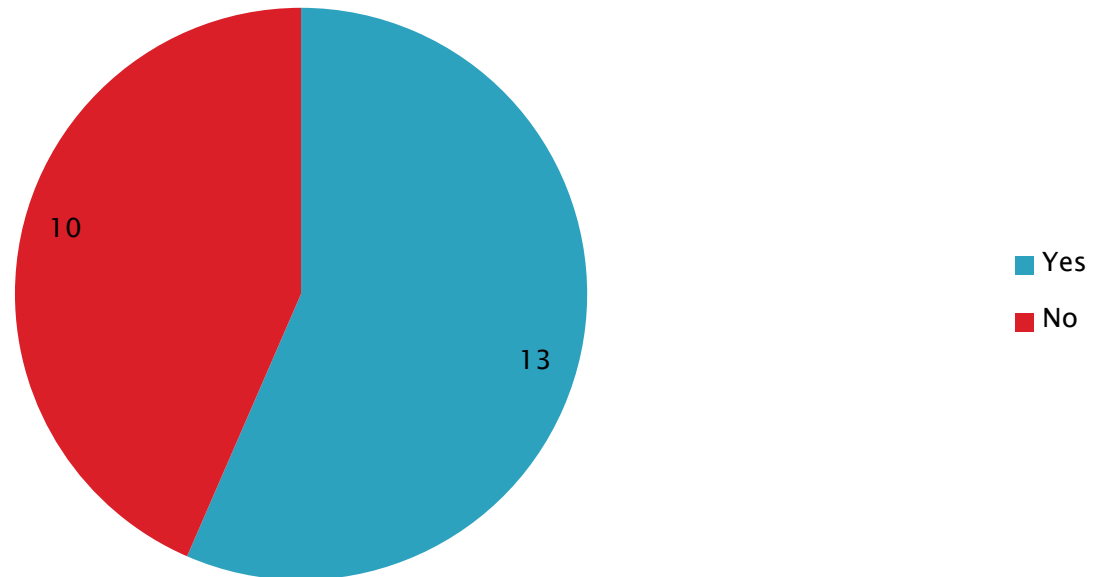
Own Choice

Youth Band (players aged 18 and under)

Own Choice

Any brass or percussion instrumentation is acceptable in the Ensemble and Youth Band classes.

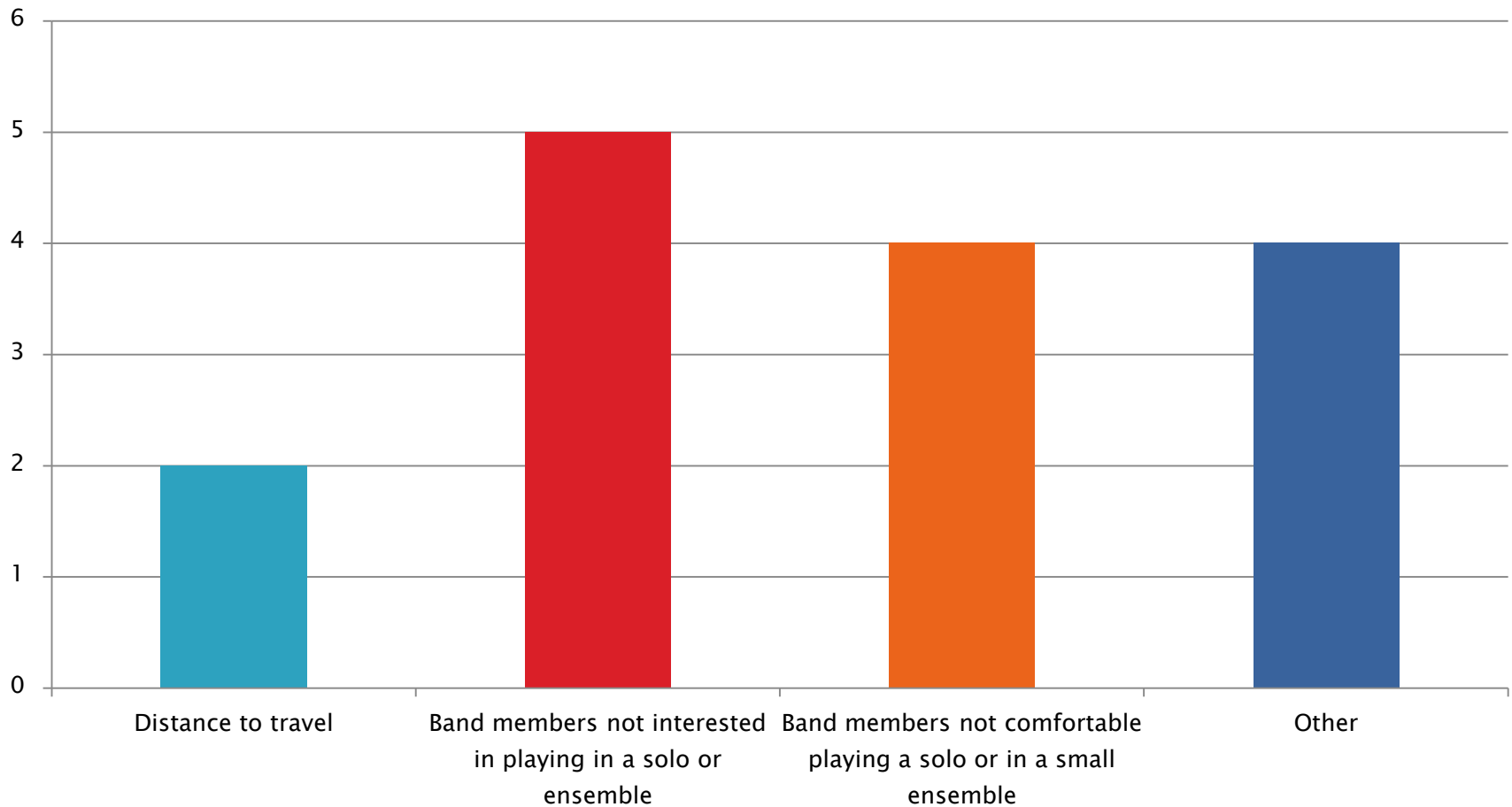
## Do your band regularly participate in the Solos and Ensembles contest?



As a band it was never pushed but I hope to change that

We presently do not contest due to the lack of numbers

**Are there any reasons why your band does not participate in this contest? Please tick all that apply.**



# Other Comments

There are travel implications!

BBL set pieces tend not to align with exam syllabus

Dates are often unsuitable

Many members feel there is something of a 'chasm' between themselves and the calibre of player they may come up against in the same section. Some feel there is a 'divide' between players of bands in the north of NI and ourselves in the south of NI and lack confidence.

# Recommendations

Accompanists provided for all sections rather than options suggested. Each band would pay a fee to cover their participants accompaniment fees, provided they each use the BBL provided accompanist

Location outside Belfast to suit more bands

Only a minor point but the small room for the Senior solos can be very hot to play in at times.

Perhaps a more precise timetable?

For ensemble sections continue with the recent introduction of grade based sections rather than fully open classes

Perhaps a venue with a bigger foyer to congregate

A better warm up facility

Separate sections for mixed ensembles and 10 piece.

Prizes for top three no matter how many people have entered

Nice if we could use our accompanist.


Better venue. Too small for the senior solos and ensembles.

Updating set pieces to reflect Trinity /ABRSM syllabuses

# Brass in Concert

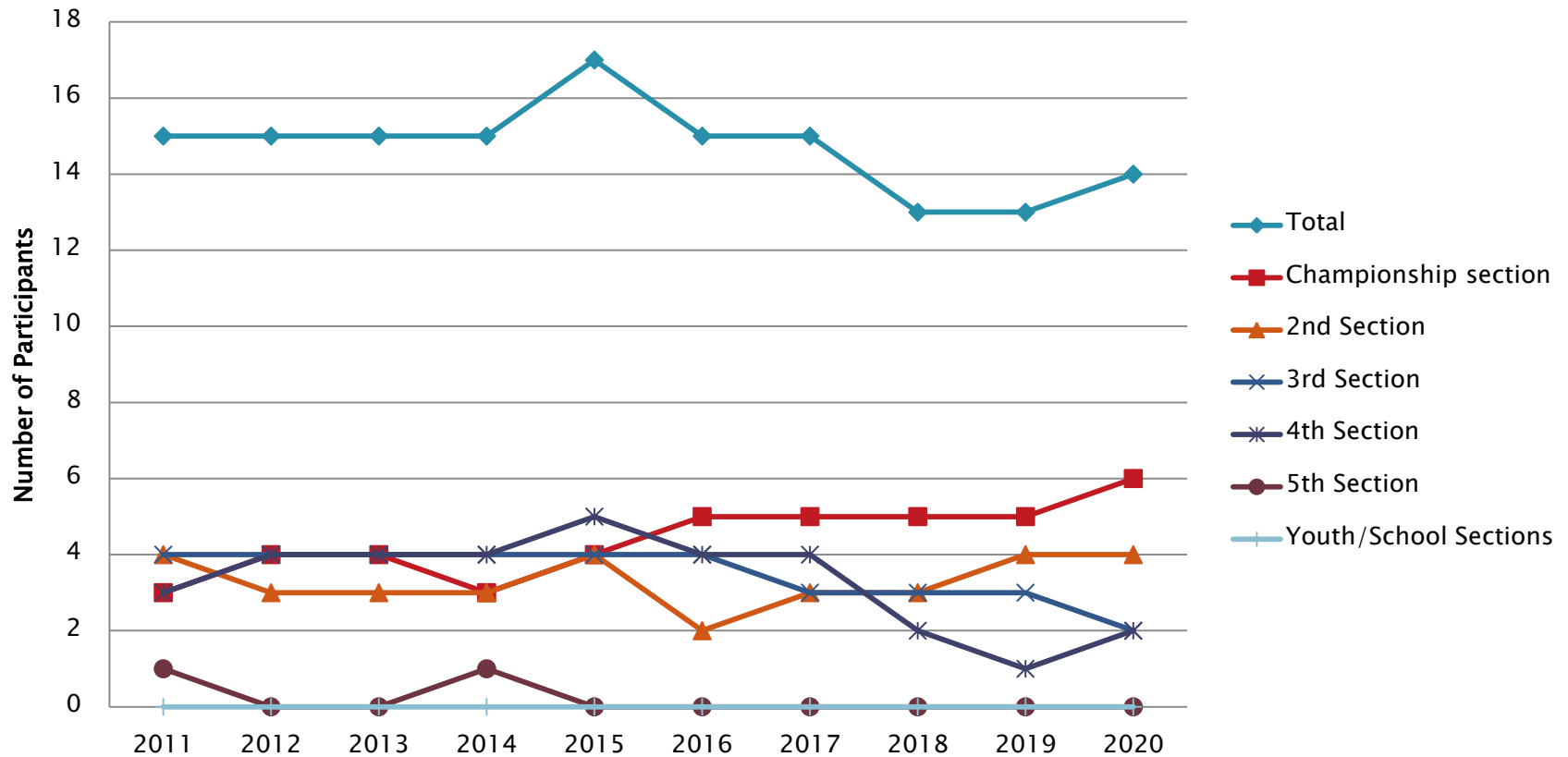
The Valley Hotel, Fivemiletown

# Background

- ▶ Brass in Concert is currently a two day event that takes place the first weekend in March in the Valley Hotel, Fivemiletown over a Friday and a Saturday
  - ▶ The Saturday is an entertainments contest with adjudicators for both music and entertainments. The music adjudicator marks the bands in terms of their musical quality whereas the entertainments adjudicators marks the bands on their presentation. Each adjudicator awards all the bands a placing – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc. The placings are then converted to points, 1<sup>st</sup> place = 10 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> place = 9 points, 3<sup>rd</sup> place = 8 points etc. If a tie occurs on points then preference is given to the music adjudication.
  - ▶ Prizes for Best March, Best Soloist and Most Entertaining Band are also awarded for each section.
  - ▶ Since 2015, 10 different bands (2 school, 7 unaffiliated, 1 affiliated) bands have featured in the Friday night concert
- 

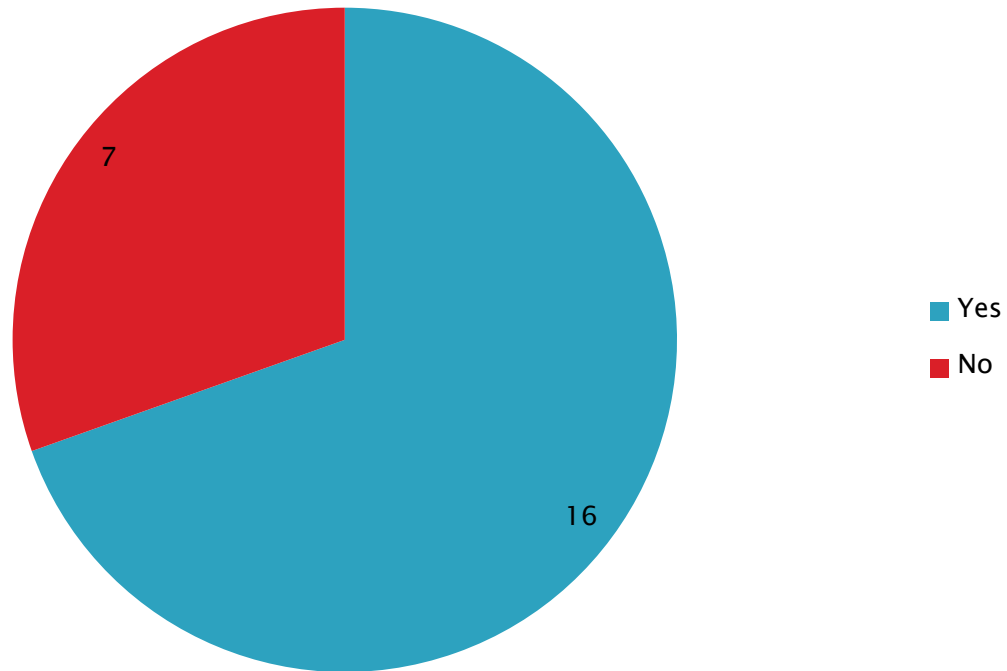
# Contest attendance over the last 9 years

## Brass in Concert Participants by Year

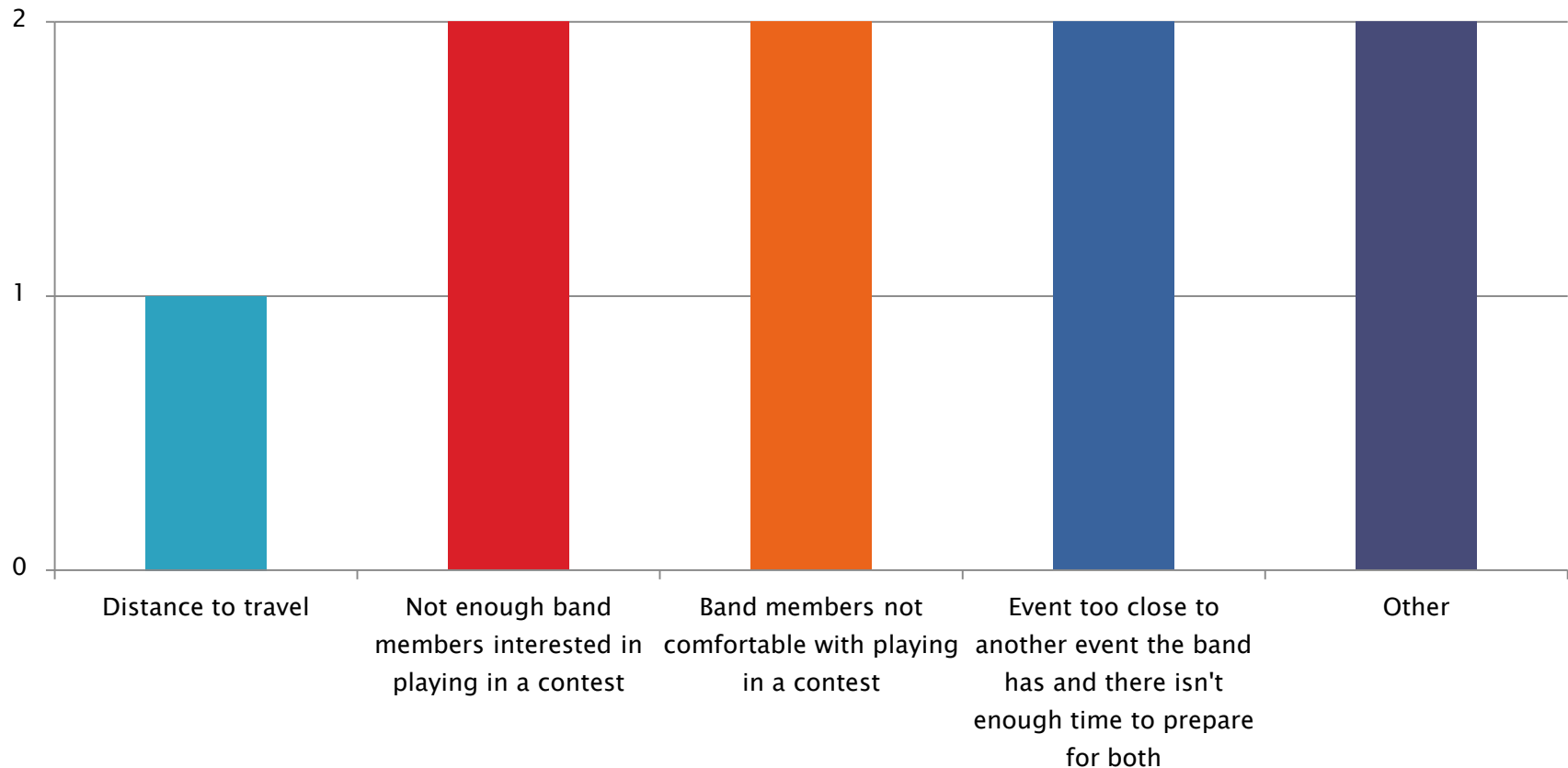




**Do your band regularly participate in the  
in the Brass in Concert contest?**



# Are there any reasons why your band does not participate in this contest? Please tick all that apply.



Traditionally we are a 'marching band' and although we do play at local concerts the element of doing this in the lens of a contest only appeals to a few members. We do play at the Friday night concert before the event.

At present trying to build our numbers up so we can contest again

# Noise at Fivemiletown

A better venue should be considered. The noise levels from non-participants are ridiculous and make it extremely difficult for the bands on stage, the audience and the adjudicators. I am aware that the BBL has actively tried to do something about this but it hasn't worked and the only way to actually sort it is to change venues

Having the performance space in such close proximity to the bar and the resulting disruption is less than ideal. .

For the Valley contest, there could be better ways of controlling noise at bar

Having the bar open in the same area as the contest is problematic (but we understand it helps make the contest financially viable). Perhaps if people could use the front bar instead during the contest this would be better for bands and adjudicator.

Can be quite noisy but to be expected at an entertainments contest

Could they have the bar outside the contest hall open.

It's a great contest which our band looks forward to competing in every year. The noise issue is always going to be there but leads to a great atmosphere. If the bands that play later in the day are very unhappy about noise maybe it should be switched year about and they can go on first thing in the morning. Or run the contest like Troon in Scotland and have the sections mixed up.

Close the bar while bands are playing, open it again during each break.

Less noise in bar area

# Other recommendations

There is no real storage for instrument cases etc.. while on stage

Some contests are very close together whether NIBA or BBL as a section 4 band it's a struggle to do this and rehearse for normal jobs as a busy band due to numbers also

Better storage facilities for instruments.

Friday night band:  
No it's very good and our band loves taking part.

# Spring Festival

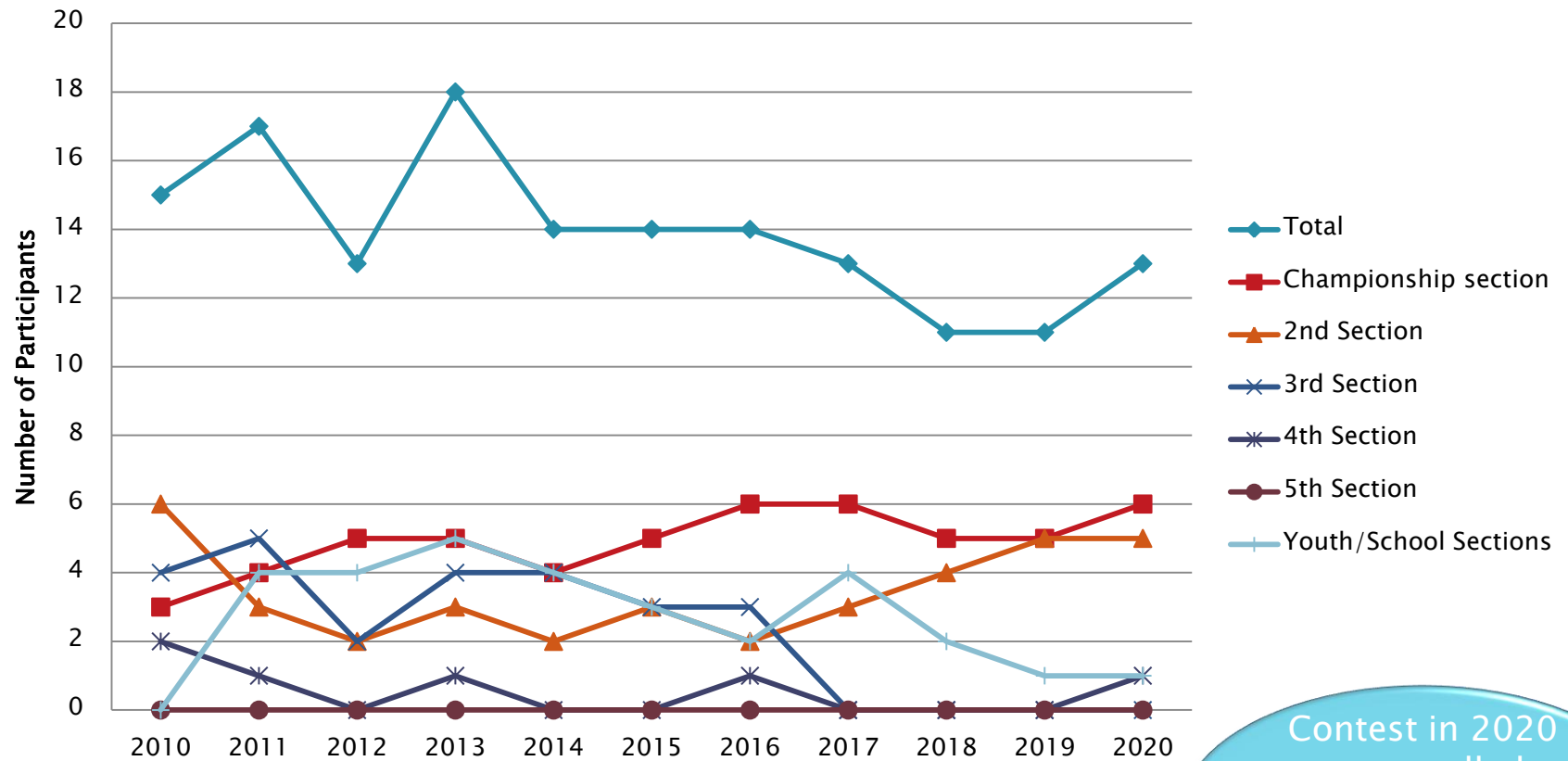
The Alley Theatre, Strabane  
The Strule Arts Centre, Omagh

# Background

- ▶ The Spring Festival is an own choice test piece contest
- ▶ The contest has taken place in many different locations throughout Northern Ireland but is next due to be held in the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh

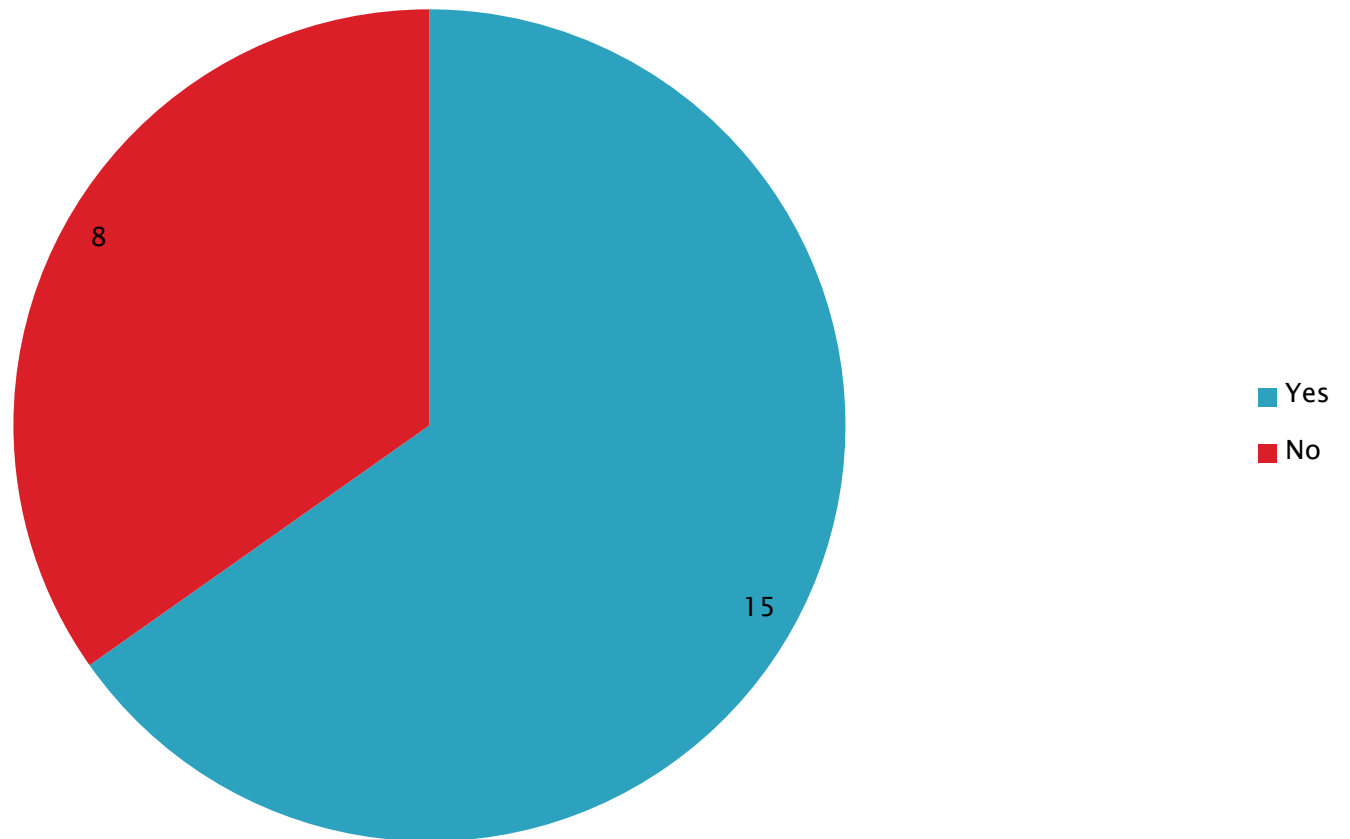
# Contest attendance over the last 10 years

## Spring Festival Participants by Year



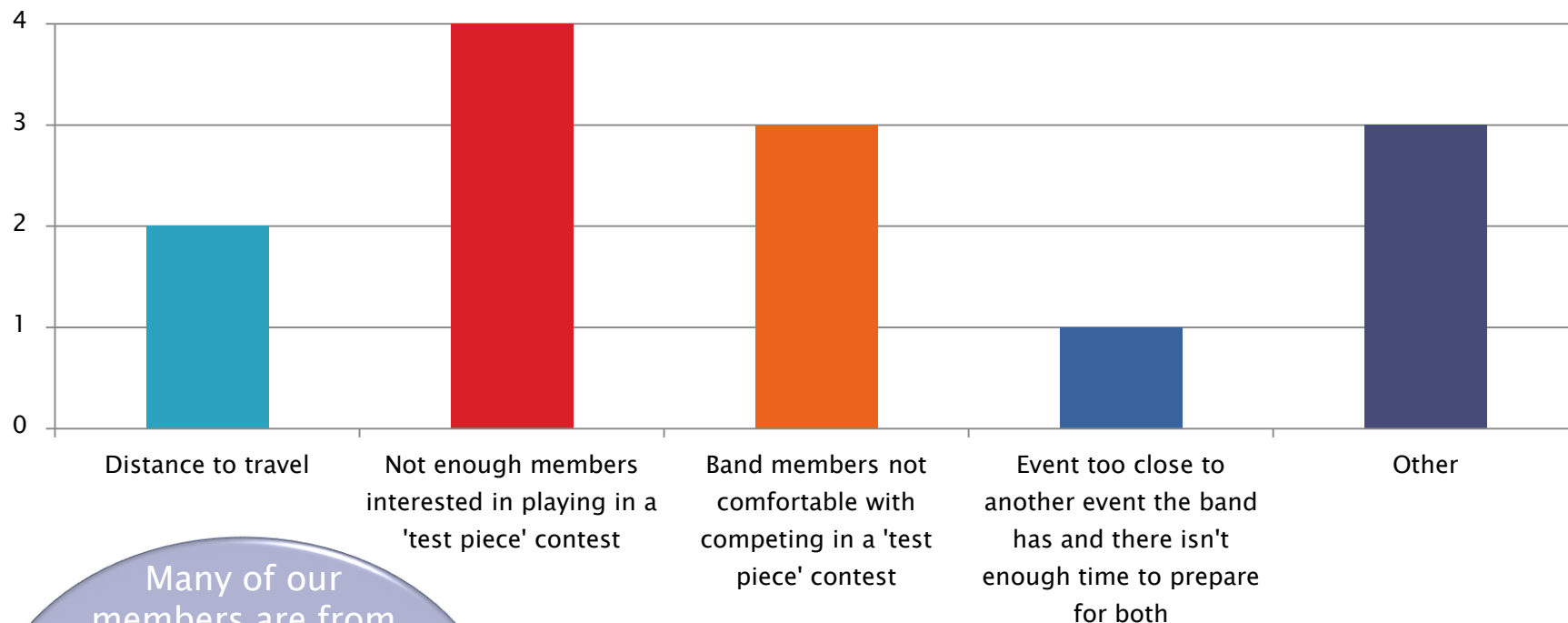
Contest in 2020 was cancelled – figures taken from entries received

**Do your band regularly compete in the Spring Festival?**





## Are there any reasons why your band does not participate in this contest? Please tick all that apply.



Many of our members are from a rural and agricultural background and it is a busy time of year for them. Many aren't keen on contesting.

As I have said before lack of numbers

We did compete but were the only band in section at last visit.

# Recommendations

Bring it  
back to  
Belfast.

Good venue

The use of the  
curtained stage in  
these venues does  
little to enhance  
the band sound,  
although the size  
and facilities at  
these theatres is  
probably ideal.

Consider making  
this a partially  
open contest so all  
bands compete in  
their own sections  
but there are  
overall placings for  
all bands. As there  
haven't been many  
lower section  
participants in  
recent years, it  
could be appealing  
for lower section  
bands to  
potentially finish  
above bands in the  
section above

Please be  
aware of  
travelling  
distance for  
bands and  
time of  
contest.

It's fine .

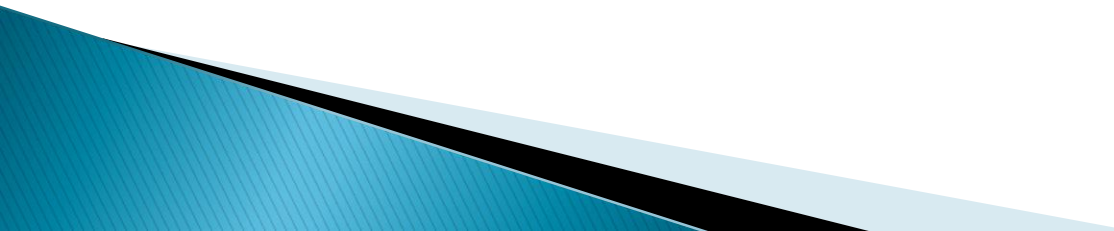
Have the  
contest  
closer to  
Belfast or  
perhaps look  
at alternate  
years East  
and West of  
the province.

# Festival of Brass

Whitla Hall, Queens University Belfast

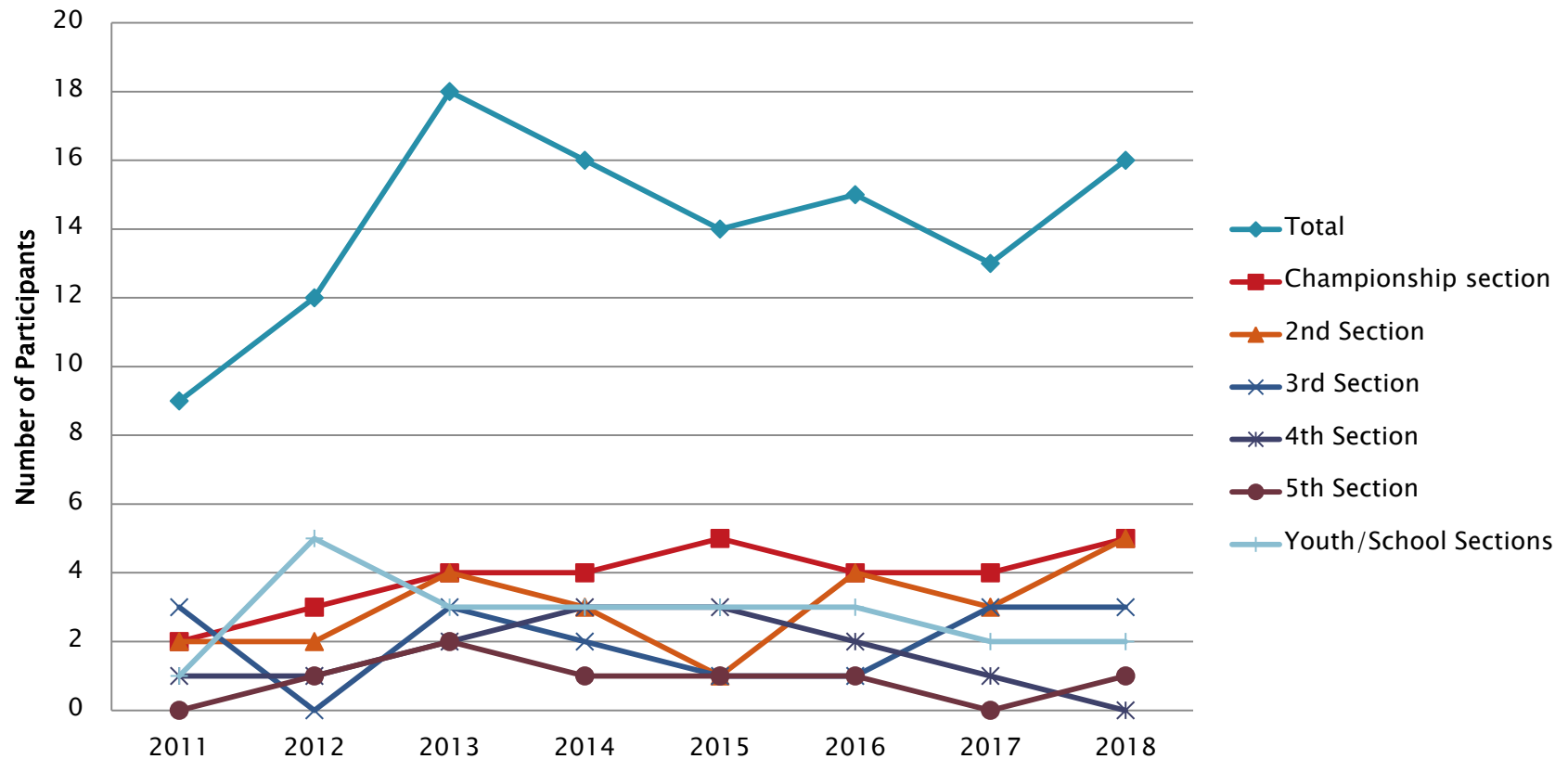
Next venue: ??????

# Background

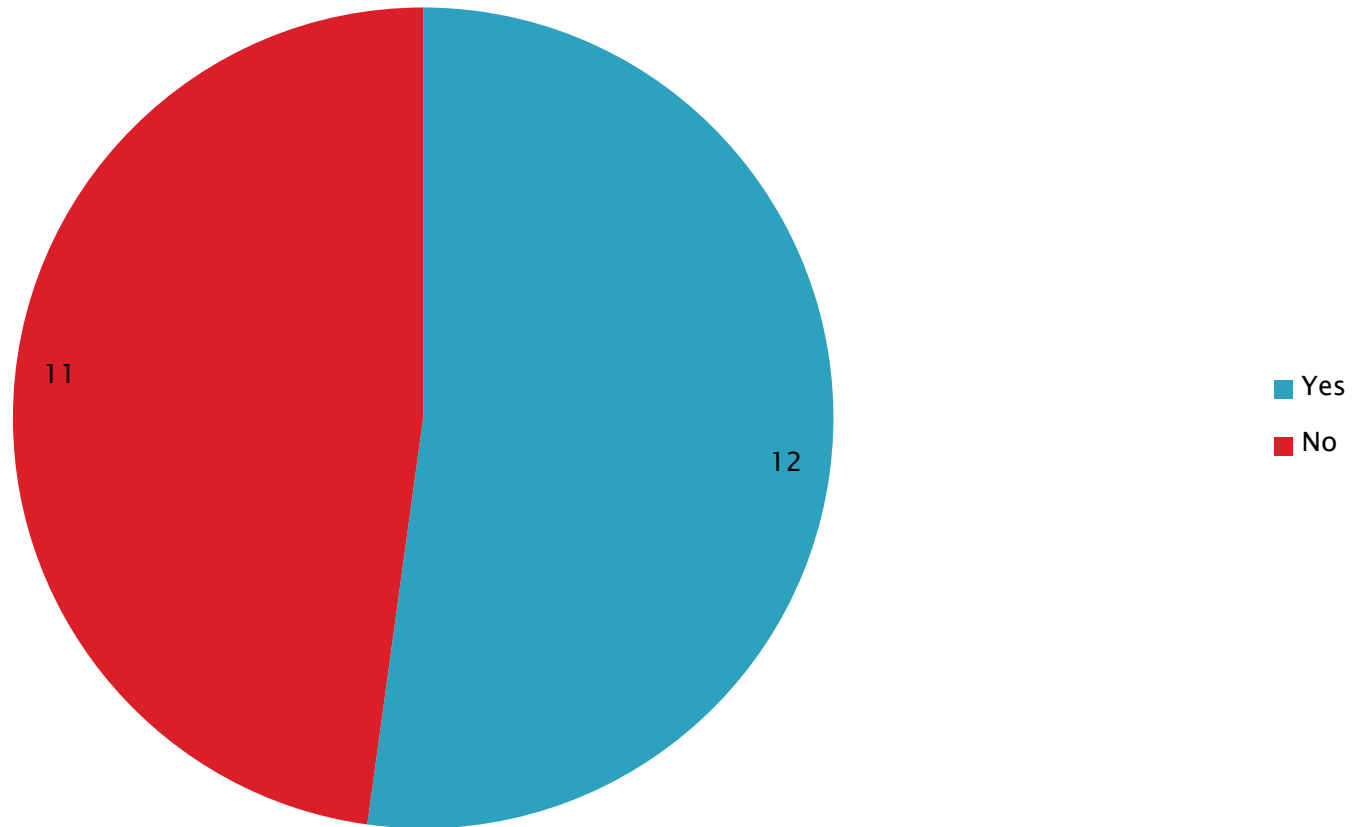
- ▶ Festival of Brass is an entertainments contest that takes place in November in Belfast or the greater Belfast area.
  - ▶ It is similar to our Brass in Concert event, with adjudicators for both music and entertainments. The music adjudicator marks the bands in terms of their musical quality whereas the entertainments adjudicators marks the bands on their presentation. Each adjudicator awards all the bands a placing – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc. The placings are then converted to points, 1st place = 10 points, 2nd place = 9 points, 3rd place = 8 points etc. If a tie occurs on points then preference is given to the music adjudication.
  - ▶ Prizes for Best March, Best Soloist and Most Entertaining Band are also awarded for each section.
- 

# Contest attendance

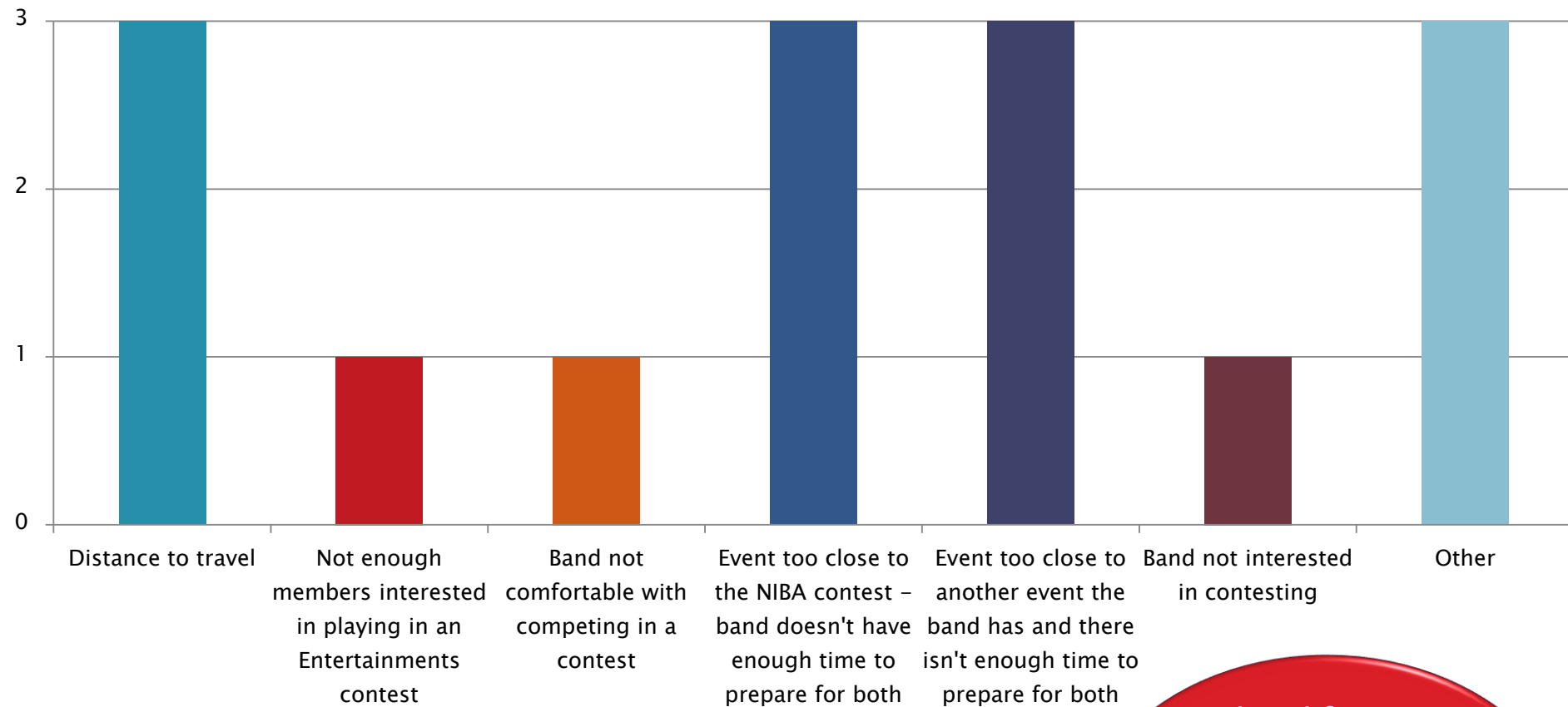
## Festival of Brass Participants by Year



**Do your band regularly participate at the Festival of Brass  
contest?**



# Are there any reasons why your band does not participate in this contest? Please tick all that apply.



Wrong time of year

Lack of numbers

It's very close to Christmas events

Our band focuses on many Christmas engagements at this time of year which takes up a lot of time. Many members aren't willing to compete in this way.

# Recommendations

This contest is well run, in a great venue. The entertainment style own choice programme suits bands of a lower standard as it encourages practice of pieces to a higher standard that are suitable for concerts / park engagements.

Trial open format at an entertainment contest (FMT or FoB) where bands don't play in section order – this will help with audience numbers earlier in the day and allow bands to easily compare themselves with others in different sections. Draw should continue to be released to bands in advance.

Timing:  
Perhaps this slot could be used for Solos and Ensembles?  
This could help to space contests out through the year. Perhaps  
2  
Entertainment contests is too many?

None we can think off

Any venue chosen should have the performance space of the Whitla Hall and a similar acoustic.

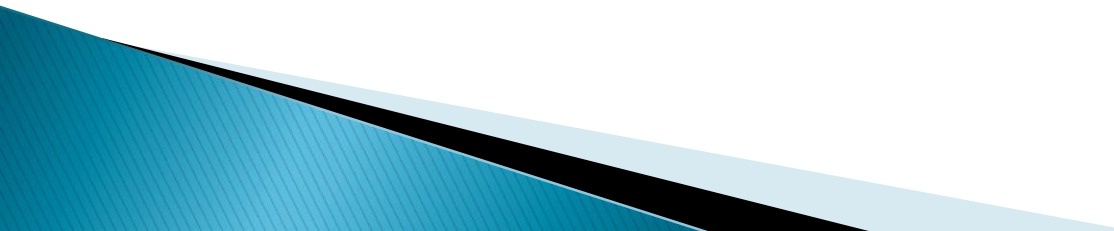
Find a suitable venue where the bands can sound the best they possibly can. Whitla Hall at Queens was too big an acoustic and hotel function suites do not show off brass bands in their best light



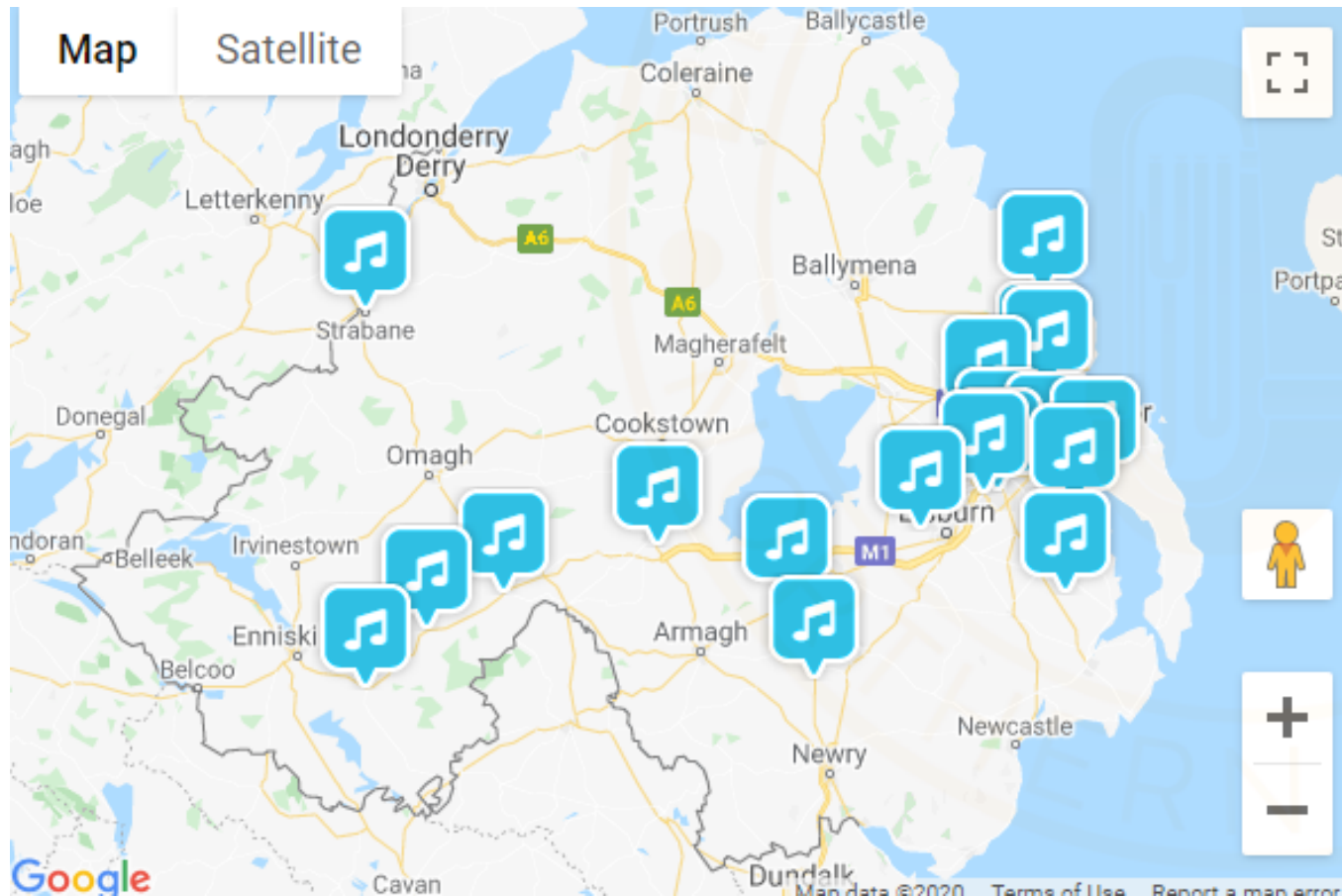
# Venues

- ▶ Some bands want more events in Belfast
- ▶ Some bands want more events outside Belfast
- ▶ Acoustics in venue

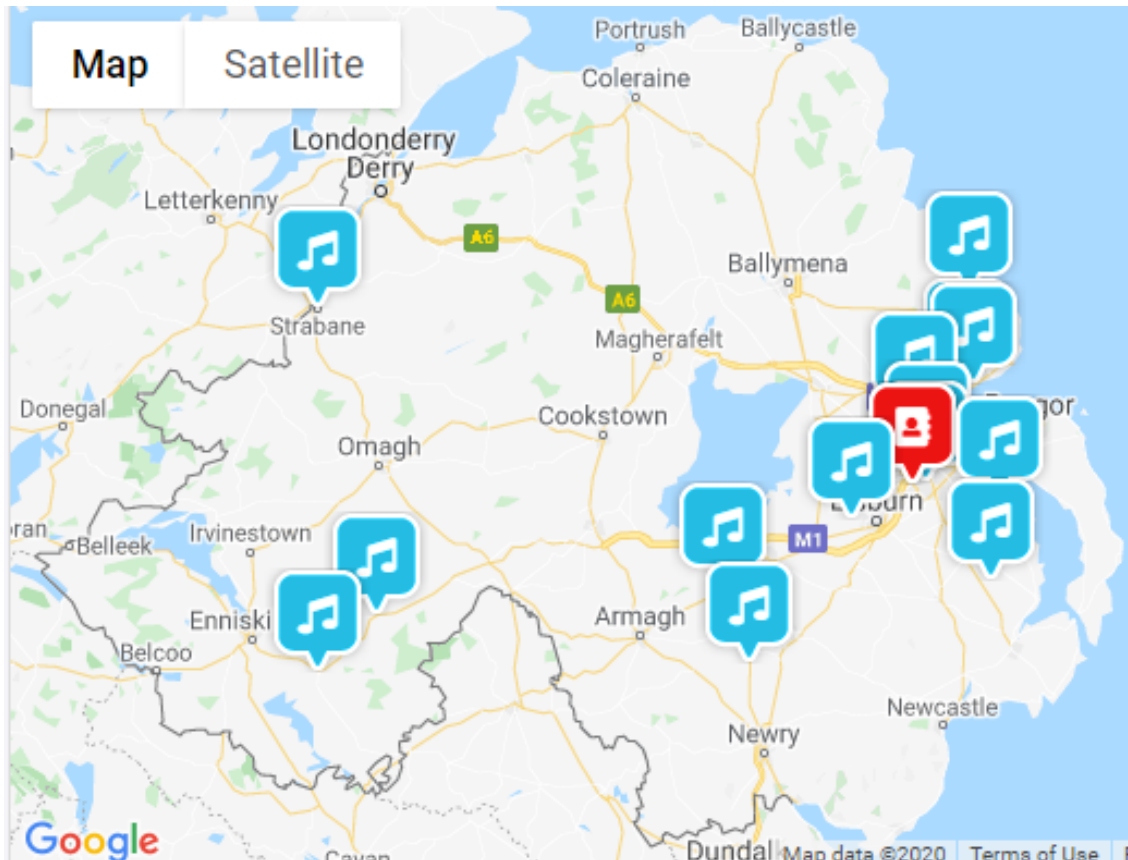
# Choosing a venue

- ▶ Cost (venue and any additional facilities)
  - ▶ Facilities (rehearsal rooms, instrument storage, car parking etc)
  - ▶ Acoustics / suitability for bands
  - ▶ Location
- 

# Map of affiliated bands



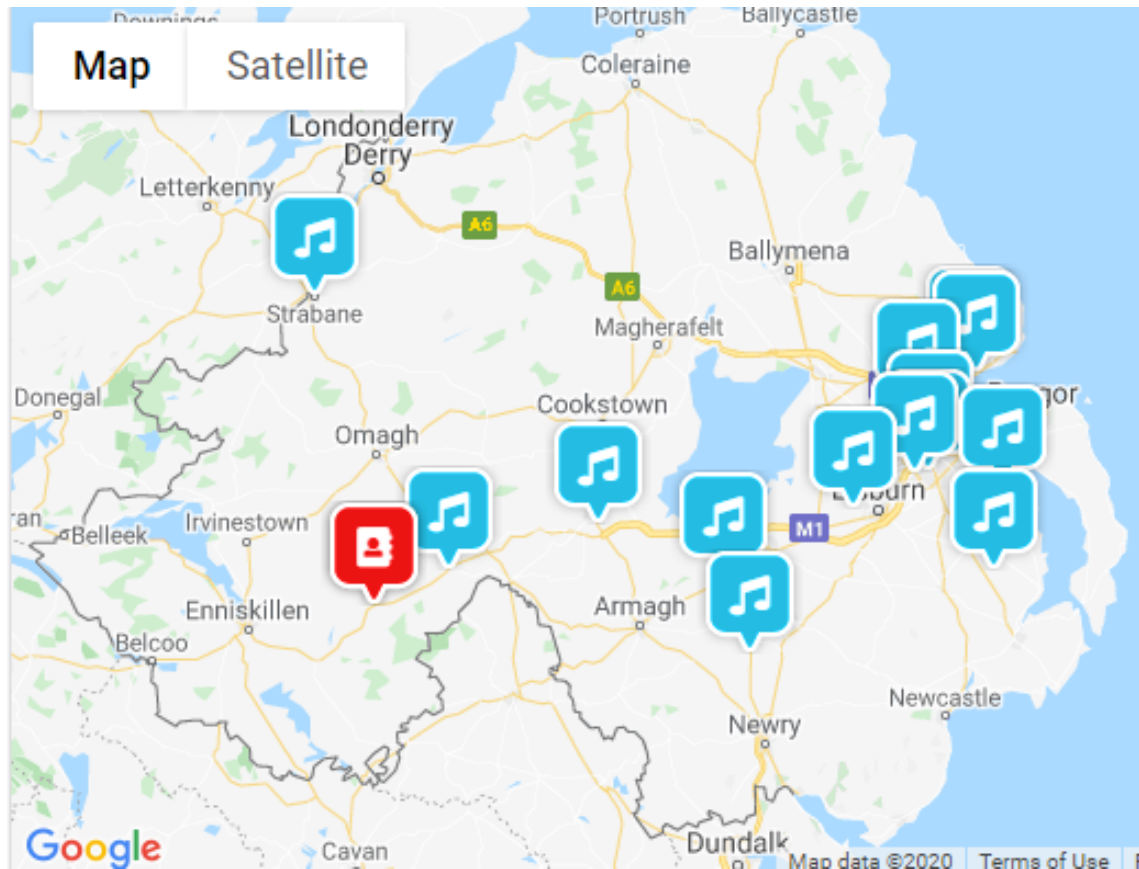
# Solos and Ensembles



Red marker =  
contest location

Blue markers =  
bands who have  
attended contests in  
the last three years

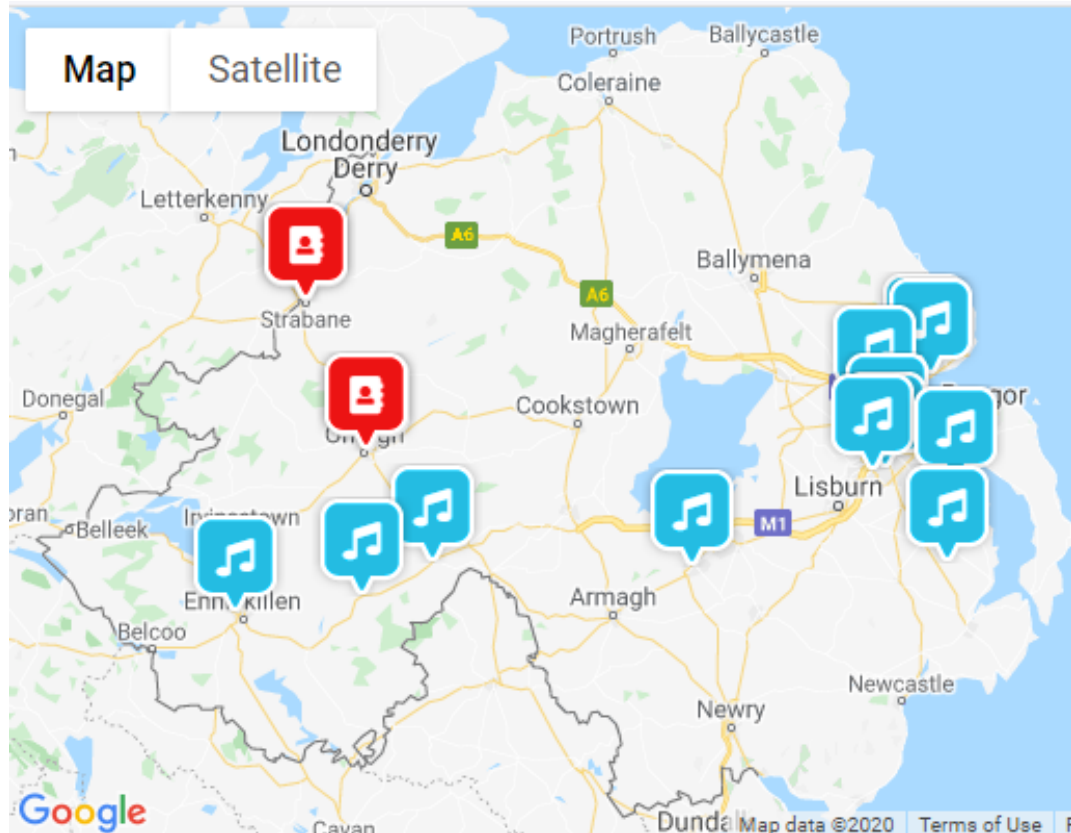
# Brass in Concert



Red marker =  
contest location

Blue markers =  
bands who have  
attended contests in  
the last three years

# Spring Festival

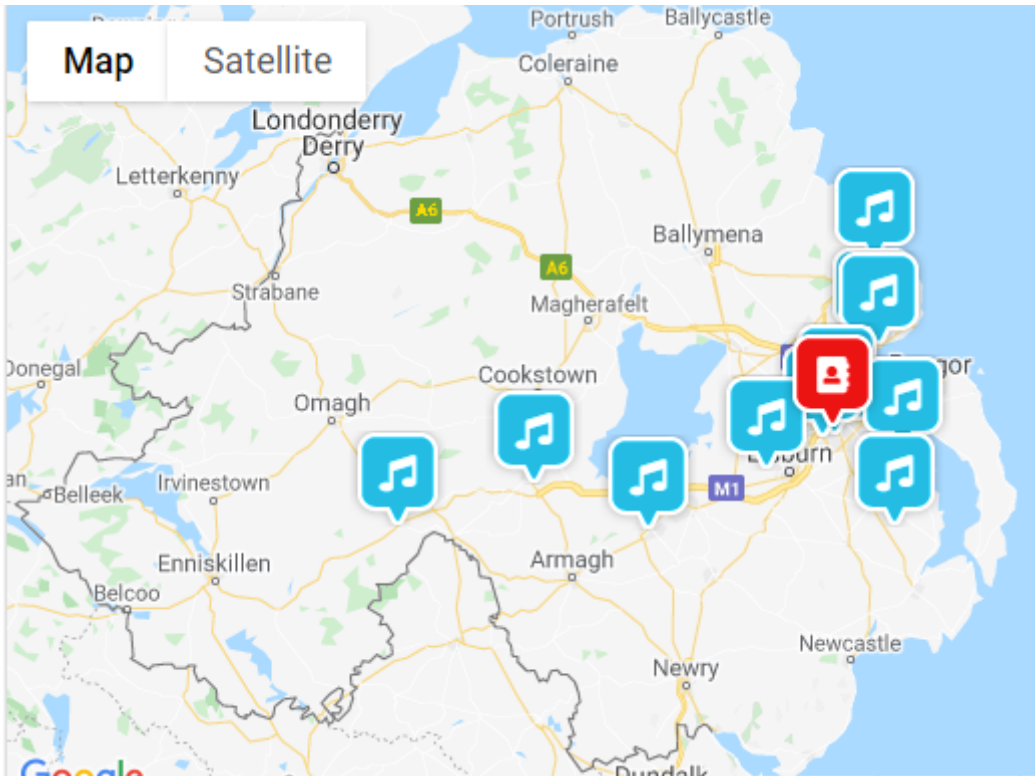


Red marker =  
contest location

Blue markers =  
bands who have  
attended contests in  
the last three years



# Festival of Brass



- ▶ Red marker = contest location
- ▶ Blue markers = bands who have attended contests in the last three years
- ▶ Lochgelly Band (Scotland), Drogheda Brass (South) and Lourdes Brass (South) also attended



# Overall affiliation and contest participation

Total Number of Participants in each contest

