

VIEW FROM INSIDE

MIKE SCOTT ON HOLDING AUDITIONS

I must be one of the world's experts on music auditions. Over the years, The Waterboys have auditioned hundreds of players, mostly drummers and bassists, and, as band leader, it's my job to conduct the auditions.

I'll draw up a running order, making sure each auditionee has enough time. It's important to greet them cheerfully and put them at ease right away; give them a little private time to rearrange the drum kit, or bass amplification, or whatever they need.

I can usually tell as soon as someone walks in if they stand a chance of getting the job or not but I give everyone a fair shot: I'm not infallible and someone might surprise me. If we've got a lot of people to try out, and after half a song I know there's

absolutely no chance this person's going to get it, I'll stop the song and say: "You're not the player we need but thanks for coming along." It's important to save the band's energy for the rest of the auditionees.

Generally, we'll do three or four songs, then I'll say: "Well, the evidence is down on tape, our manager will be in touch in a day or so." This puts them at ease leaving, as it dispels any expectation about getting an answer there and then. We often jam at auditions: it makes it more fun for us and lets the player we're auditioning relax and show their chops at the same time.

Once or twice, I've hired someone who doesn't work out – then we have to fire them and bring in someone else. It's a tough call but there's no other cure.

Mike Scott's new album with The Waterboys, Book Of Lightning (W14 Music) is out on Monday

