

President's Report for the Year 2002 presented at the ASO AGM 17th March 2003

It is with much pleasure that I present my third and last President's Report to the Armidale Symphony Orchestra AGM. 2002 was a particularly busy and successful year for the ASO from a number of perspectives.

Our three scheduled concerts in April, August and October provided variety in their programs for both players and audience. The year opened with Peter Maddox conducting his song cycle, "Kubla Kahn" with Samantha Cobcroft as soloist. The orchestra was privileged to again be able to premiere such a fine work from a local composer. The program also included a repeat of Peter's "Serenade for Strings" which had been performed a few years before, Sibelius' Karelia Suite and the Tchaikovsky 2nd Symphony. For a number of reasons, this concert was scheduled earlier (mid April) and presented in the auditorium of the Old Teachers' College. This allowed us to assess the auditorium for future concerts and although the performance was well received, it was evident that acoustic and lighting problems would compromise the auditorium as a venue for future concerts.

David Gee had originally proposed as opera aria evening for the second concert. However, due to his ill health earlier in the year and the organisational demands of the proposed program, David opted to conduct a different concert and invited Keith Power to perform the Beethoven Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No 4 in G Major. The program opened with Humperdinck's Overture to Hansel and Gretel and the Mendelssohn Symphony No 3 in A minor (the Scottish) was a popular choice for the second half. I hope that we can pick up the opera evening at another time.

Our final concert for the year took the ASO into uncharted waters. Bruce Menzies proposed a new work in Richard Harvey's Plague and the Moonflower to be performed as a semi staged production and in co-operation with other music and dance groups in Armidale. The committee agreed to present two performances, and the concept for the production developed with the enthusiasm of people like David and Fran Curtis who were working with Bruce. Members of the committee had misgivings from time to time mostly related to production costs, however the production was a great success and attracted full houses on both nights. The ASO was able to make a substantial donation to the The Armidale Tree Group, cover production costs (over \$8000) and retain a profit to support our 2003 program of concerts.

Another significant event in the year was the Christophorus Stuttgart Orchestra visit from Germany in early August. This large orchestra (over 80 players) was hosted through the generosity of ASO and Armidale families. Their outstanding concert was very well attended and the visit was a great success for the ASO both socially and financially.

A further development for the orchestra was its support of a new proposal for a Conservatorium of Music for Armidale. During the year I represented the orchestra at a number of meetings with representatives from other music organizations and chaired by Arthur Rickards. The ASO committee voted to give "in principle" support to the conservatorium proposal.

I am indebted to the ASO committee for their support and commitment to the ongoing functioning of the orchestra and its successful concerts. I would like to thank them all most sincerely for their trust in my leadership, their encouragement and most of all for getting the jobs done so willingly and efficiently.

The ASO is a most valuable organisation in the Armidale community and its future depends on energy and commitment from its members both as players and in the management of the group. I have enjoyed my three years as president – it was a real privilege – and I look forward to continued involvement with the orchestra.

Yvonne Arnold, President.