

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2007

I have much pleasure in presenting my report for 2006.

We had six highly successful concerts last year. At the beginning of the year two highly successful kids' proms concerts were held. These concerts introduced young and older folk alike to the joys of orchestral music and the symphony orchestra itself. The concept instigated by Kate Nash and conducted by Laurie Pulley is very important in bringing orchestral music to young children and in promoting the orchestra's role in the Armidale community.

The second program, conducted by Wendy Huddleston with Robyn Bradley as soloist, was extremely successful artistically and well attended. Rehearsals were enjoyable. The program consisted of: Humperdinck Hansel and Gretel Overture, Mozart Concerto in C minor K 491 (Soloist Robyn Bradley), Dvorak Symphony No 7 in D minor

The third program was a highly successful Gilbert and Sullivan gala. Bruce Menzies conducted this program which was presented in association with the Armidale Musical Society. Two performances were given at the Ex-Services Club. Both were booked out. The Saturday evening concert included a dinner. These two performances reached a very high standard which was warmly responded to by the large audiences.

The final concert was held in St Mary's Cathedral and included collaboration with the Armidale Choral Society under the direction of David Gee (Beethoven) and Bruce Menzies (Vivaldi). Again this was very successful with a high standard of orchestral playing and choral singing achieved. The collaboration with the Armidale Choral Society has been a happy one for the orchestra. The Cathedral does pose challenges for the orchestra. Moving equipment and setting up the Cathedral as a concert venue involves considerable effort and patience. However the Cathedral is a beautiful venue, visually and aurally, for the performance of large orchestral and choral religious music. The program included the Leonora Overture (Beethoven), Concerto for 2 Mandolins (Vivaldi) and the Mass in C (Beethoven). Soloists for the Beethoven included Ireni Utley, Inge Southcott, Sam Sakker and Leon Warnock.

I would again like to thank Errol Russel for his continuing commitment to, and leadership of the orchestra. Errol has given his time selflessly to music in Armidale. The Armidale Symphony Orchestra is privileged to be the recipient of his generosity.

Also thank you to all members of the committee. Without the dedication of the committee things like program design, publicity, web construction, management of music, financial management etc. etc. etc. would not happen.

The proposed amalgamation/affiliation with NECOM is progressing and hopefully another important step towards this will be taken tonight. The amalgamation will provide the orchestra with a very useful and supportive structure within the city.

Finally and by no means least I would like to thank you all for your devotion to the orchestra. You are the orchestra and it has been a privilege for all members of the committee to serve the needs of what is one of the artistic jewels in the crown of Armidale and indeed country NSW.

Unfortunately I have taken the decision not to continue as president of the orchestra. I have served four years and have thoroughly enjoyed these years. However the time has come for another approach. Actually I believe that the way forward for the orchestra is to continue to perform programs which are based around the standard symphonic repertoire. This provides a reasonable challenge for the orchestra and fulfills a need in the town. This is not to say that more adventurous programming should not take place. Last year showed the advantage of this and the enormous following the orchestra achieves when it devises programs such as the G&S performances, the combined work with the Choral Society and the Kids' Proms. I am sure that the Last Night of the Proms this year will also see a capacity audience. I would again like to thank everybody for their support during my presidency and I look forward to continuing to support the orchestra.

David Gee