

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

President's Report for 2013

2013 was another year of successful concerts for the ASO. It began with Cherubini's Requiem in C minor, the annual Choral Weekend again overseen and conducted by Brisbane's Paul Holley, and coordinated by Alana Blackburn.

Our May concert was an ASO conducting debut for Chris Garden, who selected Mozart's Betulia Liberata Overture and Haydn's Surprise Symphony. We were enormously grateful to composer Richard Harvey and recorder soloist Alana Blackburn for the very beautiful Australian Premiere of his Concerto Incantato, continuing with unique ties between the ASO and Harvey, under the baton of Bruce Menzies.

In August, Bruce again conducted a joint ASO and ADMS production of *Showboat*. Both performances were very well received by large and diverse audiences, and the concert enabled the ASO and the community of Armidale to experience a refreshingly different musical genre.

Our final concert in December was conducted by Peter Maddox. The program consisted of King Christian II Suite by Sibelius, Charlotte Hayes performing Saint-Saens' Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor (substantial illness proving no barrier for Charlotte's virtuosic performance) and completed with the challenging and very rewarding Symphony No. 2 by Brahms.

Due to the financial success of these concerts, the ASO was able to explore instrumental purchases and repairs that were badly needed, particularly within the percussion section. It is fortunate the ASO and Armidale Youth Orchestra can share equipment through joint affiliation with NECOM. After the AYO recently purchased some valuable percussion equipment, the ASO will need to match this over time with further purchases and repairs, so that expenses are evenly shared between both organisations.

It was decided recently that the ASO is to become a participating organisation of the UNE's New England Award for university students, hopefully to both encourage university student participation and to formally recognise their contributions.

As always, the success of the ASO depends largely upon the substantial amount of volunteered time and effort of its members. The Committee is particularly grateful for the untiring work of our conductors, soloists, music educators, and NECOM's administrative assistance and rehearsal facilities. During a time of change within the ASO in the past 12 -18 months, Margaret Butcher, April Kelson and Alex Crawford have all taken on the crucial role of Concertmaster and we are very grateful to them, in addition to our many section leaders.

With a very large 2013 ASO Committee, there are numerous people I wish to thank. In particular, our trusty and long serving librarian, Colin Sholl, Secretary April Kelson, Treasurer

David Rowe, ASO concert-organising veteran (and 2012 inaugural Kerry Hawkins award recipient) Maurice Anker, Publicity Officer Alana Blackburn, Chris Cunningham for stepping in to fill several last-minute roles, NECOM Board Rep David Gee, and AYO (+ASO) equipment officer John Hadfield.

We welcomed many new members to the ASO in 2013, which is another integral part of the ongoing success of the ASO. Sadly we also must farewell two very long-serving members from the Committee:

We wish Wendy Huddleston all the very best for her move to Canberra with Warren and thank her for her many, many years as a musician, committee member, mentor and conductor of the ASO and her outstanding contributions to the musical community. It is planned to hold a formal event in the near future to show our appreciation as an orchestra for her hard work, enthusiasm and musicianship.

After over 40 years of serving on the ASO Committee, Laurie Pulley will be stepping down this year from the Committee. Such longstanding commitment to the management and running of the ASO is incredible. I offer heartfelt thanks personally, on behalf of the Committee and also the ASO. Bravo.

Jacqui Thompson

17th March 2014 ASO AGM