

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

President's Report - 2015

AGM 21st March 2016

2015 has been another year of great concerts and music making – with one of the highlights the many new musicians and a new conductor joining the orchestra through the year.

The ASO year commenced with the traditional collaboration with the Armidale Music Foundation (AMF) in early March for the AMF choral weekend. This choral weekend continues to grow in popularity and provides an important opportunity for singers across the region to work on major choral works with an orchestra and under the direction of a conductor who specialises in choral works. Following a full weekend of fun and inspiring music making in rehearsals, on Sunday 8th March the AMF Choir and the ASO Orchestra performed Vivaldi's Gloria RV588 under the baton of conductor Paul Holley with Joanna Fairs-Wu as concertmaster.

The orchestra's second concert for the year was a flamboyant Last Night of the Proms in Armidale conducted by David Gee with Andreas Basoglou as concertmaster. The concert was delivered in collaboration with members of the Fiori Musicali and Armidale Choral Society choirs. The program included *Brahms' Academic Festival Overture*, *Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 (New World)*, *Handel's Zadok the Priest*, *Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance March No.1*, *Parry's Jerusalem* and a bicentennial collection of Australian tunes. *Arne's Rule Britannia* was performed with soloist Ruth Strutt along with the Traditional Home sweet home with soloist Kylie Constantine. The concert also featured a rousing performance of *Taylor's Naval Flourish*, traditional Hornpipe and Strathspey and Reel by drummers Geoff Walsh and James Walsh and pipers Caitlin McInnes, Nathaniel Agnew and Henry Aleman. This concert was dedicated to the memory of Marian Barford and Richard Pulley, who were greatly valued members of the Armidale Symphony Orchestra.

The third ASO concert for the year was a Celebration of Cole Porter. This concert was presented twice on the 15th and 16th of August together with the Armidale Dramatic and Musical Society (ADMS) as part of our ongoing biennial collaboration. The concert was performed to enthusiastic audiences under the direction of conductor Bruce Menzies supported by a huge team of performers and crew. A selection of 21 of Cole Porter's well known and much loved songs, including favourites such as "Night and day", "Too darn hot" and "I get a kick out of you". These concerts were a great success thanks to the collective efforts of ASO players with Andreas Basoglou as concertmaster, 20 local soloists, full choir and production team.

For the orchestra's final concert for 2015 on December 6th we welcomed a new conductor to the podium, highly respected Brisbane conductor Stephen Wu, for his

first collaboration with the ASO supported by Margaret Butcher as concertmaster. The orchestra performed *Albinoni's Adagio*, *Mozart's Divertimento in F*, followed by *Danzi's Bassoon concerto*, performed with acclaimed soloist Peter Musson, and finally *Beethoven's Symphony No. 4*.

The ASO is sincerely grateful for the considerable efforts of our many conductors, soloists, concertmasters and section leaders, as well as the contributions of our individual orchestra members. We are fortunate to have many music educators and professional musicians playing alongside our many skilled amateur musicians. Together we can continue to attempt challenging and rewarding repertoire. It has been a pleasure to welcome a number of new members who have joined or re-joined us in the past year. The support shown for the orchestra is very encouraging and means we can continue to plan an exciting future for the ASO. The 2016 program will see Peter Maddox, Graham Maddox and Bruce Menzies back on the conductor's podium, along with the ASO Conducting debut of Robert Jackson.

As a community organisation, the ASO relies not only on strong membership of the orchestra, but also the assistance of a committed group of volunteers. Sincere thanks goes to all on the ASO Committee. In particular Vice President Chris Cunningham (who this year was also Acting President from mid-June to late August and has been Acting Secretary for the past 4 months), treasurer David Rowe, secretary Gerard Larkins, publicity officer Alana Blackburn, and librarian and website manager Colin Sholl. A big thankyou also to the general committee members Iliane Beuke, Robert Jackson, Stuart Pavel, Graham Maddox, Peter Maddox, and Sue Metcalfe for all their efforts. A big thankyou also to Maurice Anker and John Hadfield who whilst not on the ASO committee are a huge help in running the orchestra and organising musical equipment and logistics for our concerts. Special thanks also to our 2015 conductors Bruce Menzies, David Gee and Stephen Wu, along with concert masters Andreas Basoglou, Joanna Fairs-Wu and Margaret Butcher.

In wrapping up my term as ASO President, I would like to congratulate all the orchestra members on the quality performances presented this year, and personally thank all our conductors, soloists, concert masters, orchestra members and especially the ASO Committee for all your support in making the ASO the great community orchestra that it is. With many generous and skilled people willing to contribute their time and experience to the orchestra, it will no doubt continue to be a successful and important part of the Armidale region's musical community.

Francesca Andreoni
ASO President
21st March 2016