

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Annual General Meeting - Monday 23rd March 1998

Presidents Report

At last years AGM Narelle Williams, our Treasurer, expressed serious concerns about the financial state of the Armidale Symphony Orchestra. She pointed out that if we pursued the established trend, we would soon become bankrupt. Narelle's words or warning were taken seriously and I am pleased to say that the tide appears to have been stemmed. There are two factors that have influenced this turnabout:

Firstly, we have pursued a concerted effort to obtain sponsorship. For this we must chiefly thank the efforts of Joanne Metcalfe. It is due to her hard work that we have received financial assistance, and assistance in kind, from several organisations such as New England Credit Union, the University of New England Union and the Armidale Ex Services Club.

Secondly, the first concert of last year – David Gee's "Last Night of the Proms" was a record financial success earning approximately \$2000 for the orchestra. Of course David's' concert was not only a financial success and an exciting occasion but also a musical triumph. Beginning with Beethoven's Leonora Overture No. 3 and Copland's Corral nocturne from Rodeo we then heard Wayne Elliott play the Arutunian trumpet concerto and Judith Gee perform Saint Saens Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, both with great skill. The second half of the concert was true Last Night of the Proms Fare and inspired much flag waving, whistle blowing and singing but due to David's accomplished direction avoided being overtly jingoistic.

Wendy Huddleston conducted our second concert, which as usual demonstrated her inspired program choice. Beginning with Graingers flamboyant Danish Folk Song Suite (with it's quirky "elastic scoring"), the program continued with Elgar's wonderful Song Cycle Sea Pictures, sung movingly by Wendy's sister Helen Swann. The concert culminated with a work by one of Wendy's favourite composers: Antonin Dvorak.

Our final concert was another innovation. Devised and conducted by Errol Russell and entitled "Youth on Parade", the program showcased the considerable skill of our younger players in a varied and exciting program: Alice Rickards, Paddy Lawson, Sarah Jones and Hugh Driscoll performed the Vivaldi Concerto for four violins, Hadley White the concertino for piano and orchestra, Anna Bailey the Weber clarinet concerto No. 2, Isabella Ellis the Max Bruch Kol Nidrei, Samantha Brady the Bach B minor Suite for flute and Ossie Jellyman the Rimsky Korsakov trombone concerto, all with skill and flair.

As is usual, our concerns about losing our senior and more skilled players are ameliorated by new and younger gifted performers. I am thoroughly enjoying working with you all in the current program which I feel will maintain last years standards.

Finally I would like to thank the committee once again for their tireless support over the past year.

Bruce Menzies