

Armidale Symphony Orchestra - President's Report for 2010

I have much pleasure in presenting my report for the year ending 31 December 2010.

The Orchestra's first activity for the year was to participate in the Armidale Music Foundation's thirteenth annual choral weekend. This time the work performed was Mendelssohn's setting of psalm 42 *As Pants the Hart*. As usual we were fortunate to have Rick McIntyre as conductor, with Paul Holley as choral director, and Errol Russell and John Kellaway as string and brass tutors respectively.

Wendy Huddleston conducted the orchestra in a wonderful May concert featuring Deidre Rickards performing Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A minor*. The concert opened with Borodin's *Overture to Prince Igor* and concluded with the little known but delightful *Symphony No. 3 in C major (Sinfonie Singulière)* by Franz Berwald.

The highlight of the August concert was the return to Armidale of James Maddox to perform Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 20* and Brahms' *Rhapsody in B minor op 79, No. 1*. Also on the program, conducted by Graham Maddox, were Chabrier's *Espana* and Dvorak's *Symphony No. 5*.

In September, Laurie Pulley and Melodie Glass, with assistance from NECOM's *Mini Minstrels* singers, led a youthful audience on a mysterious *Bear Hunt* in a return of the popular Kid's Proms Concert. All the usual Kid's Proms favourites were on the program including Mendelssohn's *Dance of the Clowns*, Mozart's *Sleigh Ride*, and of course *I'm a Little Teapot*. The ASO was pleased to be able to donate the proceeds of this concert to support the Mini Minstrels Outreach Program.

Our final concert for the year with *Fiori Musicali* and invited soloists was based on music inspired by the works of William Shakespeare. The Food of Love perhaps? Certainly the opening work, Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* based on *Act V, Scene 1* of *The Merchant of Venice*, fits that theme. In sharp contrast though, William Walton's music for the film of *Henry V*, including a fiery representation of the *Battle of Agincourt*, is anything but. The narration by Chris Ross-Smith and speeches by Gareth Rickards were especially dramatic. The concert concluded with the closing sequence from Benjamin Britten's opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Several members of the orchestra were also involved in the production of *UrineTown* with ADMS.

The planned respringing of the rehearsal room floor took rather longer than expected, but has now been completed and we look forward to many years of uninterrupted use of the facility.

I would like to thank all the members of the ASO executive for their support and especially the conductors Wendy, Graham and Bruce for their continuing inspirational leadership.

Maurice Anker