

Armidale Symphony Orchestra - President's Report for 2009

I have much pleasure in presenting my report for the year ending 31 December 2009.

The orchestra began its 2009 activities by participating in the Armidale Music Foundation's twelfth annual choral weekend performing Elgar's *Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands* under the expert tutelage of conductor Rick McIntyre, choral director Paul Holley, string tutor Errol Russel and brass tutor John Kellaway.

In its first main concert for the year in May, Wendy Huddleston conducted the orchestra in a heart-wrenching performance of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with Inge Southcott as the soloist. Other works on the program were Schubert's *Rosamunde Overture*, Michael Tippett's suite of spirituals from *A Child of Our Time* performed by Fiori Musicali, and some short pieces by Borodin and Bernstein.

In the August concert, the orchestra was joined by the Armidale Drama and Musical Society and invited soloists to present *A Night at the Opera* with Bruce Menzies directing. As usual this kind of performance proved to be very popular with the audience, and although more tables could have been sold for the Saturday evening dinner concert, the Sunday afternoon performance was full to capacity and some people had to be turned away at the door.

The December 6 concert, conducted by Graham Maddox, opened with *Summer-night on the River* by Delius. This theme continued as Wendy Huddleston directed Fiori Musicali and tenor Phil Oxley in another work by Delius entitled *To be Sung of a Summer Night on the Water I and II*. Gerard Larkins was then soloist in the contemporary flute concerto *Spirits of the Mask* by Bruce Miller. Fiori Musical again took the stage to present *Six Songs to be Sung Outdoors* Op. 59 Nos. IV, V and VI by Mendelssohn and the concert concluded with a well-received performance of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*.

As usual several members of the orchestra were involved in productions by other performing groups, including *HMS Pinafore* with ADMS and *Into the Woods* with the Armidale Playhouse.

Our final performance for the year was an innovation for the orchestra in which Ian Slater conducted a selection of Christmas carols in the Centro Shopping Centre as a fund raiser in support of the Uniting Church's Christmas dinner. We thank the management of Centro for the opportunity to the life of the Armidale community in this way.

The refurbishment of the OTC gymnasium as an orchestral rehearsal space has proved to be very successful and I thank former NECOM director Corrine Arter for her efforts in bringing that to pass. As mentioned in the January newsletter, however, there is likely to be some disruption to our use of this facility as the sprung floor is renewed under a heritage grant obtained by the Friends of OTC.

I would like to congratulate Julie Croft on her appointment as director of NECOM and to thank her and all the staff of NECOM for their continuing support of the orchestra.

Finally I thank all the members of the ASO executive for their support and hard work during the year.

Maurice Anker