

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

President's Report for 2014

The past year has been one of great concerts, several firsts for the ASO, sad farewells, and the welcoming of many new musicians.

2014 commenced with Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms, the ASO playing at the AMF choral weekend in March with Paul Holley again conducting. Following this enjoyable weekend of music was the ASO's May 18th concert. Graham Maddox conducted the world premiere of brother and ASO member Richard Peter Maddox's Fluent Parody, with Peter featuring as organ soloist. Deidre Rickards returned as highly-regarded soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3. and the program concluded with Schumann's Symphony No. 3 (Rhenisch).

We were delighted to welcome Nick Negerevich as ASO conductor for our 7th August concert. The program consisted of J.C. Bach's La Clemenza di Scipione Overture, Peter Warlock's Capriol Suite, the ambitious but very beautiful Concerto for Violin by Samuel Barber and Hadyn's Symphony No. 31. Margaret Butcher gave an outstanding performance of the demanding Barber in her first concerto with the ASO.

Our final concert for 2014 on 7th December included the remarkable and unique Maddox family conductor-composer-soloist combination. Commencing with Mozart's Overture La Finta Giardiniera, this was followed by Richard Peter Maddox conducting another world premiere of his own Oboe Concerto No.2 with brother Graham Maddox as soloist. The program concluded with Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 ("Italian"). The Maddox brothers certainly continued to work hard for the ASO in 2014, and we are very grateful for their efforts.

The ASO is sincerely grateful for the considerable efforts of our conductors, soloists, section leaders and concertmasters, as well as the contributions of our individual members. The past year has seen April Kelson, Julie Fawcett, Colin Sholl, Joanna Fairs-Wu in early 2015 and currently Andreas Basoglou as concertmasters. We are very fortunate that they have been prepared to take on this role. We are equally fortunate to have many music educators and professional musicians support the ASO as members, leaders, tutors and providing guidance. With their ongoing contributions, the ASO can continue to attempt challenging and rewarding repertoire.

The last year has been one of several sad goodbyes. A farewell for Wendy Huddleston was held on 2nd May, acknowledging her contributions to the ASO and many other musical groups and organisations over many decades. We were all very shocked and saddened to hear the news of the passing of Richard Pulley on 30th December, followed by the equally

tragic passing of Marian Barford on 24th January. Both gifted musicians and committed ASO members in their time with us, they are very deeply missed.

On a happier note, it is delightful that an almost unprecedented number of new members have joined or re-joined us in the past year, and particularly over the last couple of months. With many new school members, university students, amateur and professional musicians and music teachers joining our ranks, it is very encouraging and means we can continue to plan an exciting future for the ASO. Due to successful concerts and a positive financial position, in 2014 the ASO has also been able to purchase or jointly purchase much needed equipment such as new music stands, percussion instruments and carry out necessary repairs. It has also continued to sponsor the Armidale Eisteddfod, and NECOM in its 10th Anniversary celebrations.

As well as a strong membership, the ASO depends on the assistance of a backbone of committed volunteers to run this community organisation. Sincere thanks goes to secretary Gerard Larkins, Treasurer David Rowe, Publicity Officer Alana Blackburn, Vice President Chris Cunningham, Librarian and website manager Colin Sholl, and Maurice Anker and John Hadfield who both help oversee and maintain much of our musical equipment. Maurice also prepares most of our poster designs.

A few important tasks and challenges lie ahead for our new Committee. These include re-establishing recommendations or guidelines for conductors, programming ahead for concerts, the soloist selection process, managing our equipment list, and addressing difficulties with rehearsal attendance rates. In ending my term as ASO President, I would like to personally thank all our conductors, soloists, concertmasters, orchestra members and especially the ASO Committee for supporting me in this role over several years. With many generous people willing to donate their time, skills and experience to the orchestra, it will continue to be a successful and important part of the Armidale region's musical community.

Jacqui Thompson

16th March 2015 ASO AGM