

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Vice President's Report - 2017

In the time that Stuart Pavel was gallivanting around Europe attending Concerts and testing fine food and wines, the ASO committee worked tirelessly to prepare the ASO August Concert with the Armidale Drama and Musical Society.

Bruce Menzies conducted his 45th program with the Orchestra presenting two performances of Rodgers and Hammerstein repertoire, which Laura Curotta chaired as concert master on both the Saturday evening the 12th of August and the Sunday afternoon the 13th of August. Both concerts were well attended and the Do Re Mi from the Sound of Music, the crowd favourite, featuring as one of the encore items on the second evening.

Following the concert, the orchestra mailing list received a monkey survey to fill out online to provide feedback about conductors, repertoire, rehearsals and matters to consider for the future of the Orchestra. Overall the Orchestra members responded favourably and said that they were very satisfied playing with ASO, with more than 50% of the orchestra responding that they would like to play in 4 or more concerts per year with the orchestra.

There were many ideas for repertoire, with many responses wanting to play popular and or film music as well as Russian music.

This was the catalyst for the committee to begin to plan for 2018 ASO programs.

Bruce Meyers proposed an All Russian Program to play including works by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Khachaturian.

Russel Bauer was approached on behalf of the committee and proposed a concert to include excerpts of the Planets by Holst and film music including E.T

The committee also started to think about how to weave into the ASO calendar the possibility of more concerts, which lead to the Autumn festival performance idea. This was subsequently discussed with Council in late 2016 with in principal support being given to the orchestra to play in the Festival.

Ben Thorn was also approached on behalf of the committee to see if the Orchestra would be able to play our traditional May concert as part of the New England Bach festival. Stephen Wu put up his hand and proposed a program that would feature Music from Handel, Haydn and Bach.

Eliza Scott and Lachlan O'Donell were asked to play the Bach Double Violin Concerto, although Lachlan was unable to commit to the project, Eliza suggested with Bach a minor, or Mendelssohn Violin concerto as a back up. (The Mendelssohn she had just played in her final recital at the Queensland Conservatorium of music eventually being selected to play by Stephen and Eliza so to include more players in the Orchestra.)

At the end of 2017 Dr Graham Maddox premiered the Concerto for two guitars and orchestra by Tailleferre in Australia with Soloists Stephen Tafra and Stephen Thorneycroft. He also presented Mozart's Symphony No. 31 and the Brahms requiem with the Armidale Choral society. The concert was well attended and although there were a few heart in mouth moments, the Orchestra and choir made it to the final bars and were congratulated by a more than appreciative audience.

Thank you to Dr Maddox and Dr Menzies for your conducting, thank you to Laura Curotta for her Concert mastering. Thank you to Martin Hansford for recording the Orchestra and Orchestral members for attending rehearsals.

Finally, thank you to the committee, who lead me and pushed me to find solutions and compromises while organising the 2018 program.

Robert Jackson
ASO Vice President
26 March 2017

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President's Report - 2017

2017 saw the orchestra go from strength to strength with very nearly a full compliment of wind players for each concert. It is also pleasing to see that our string players are growing in number and we are able to achieve a more balanced sound.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the new and returning players in 2017 and hope that you will be able to keep playing with us in the years to come.

The year started with our annual contribution to the AMF's Choral Weekend by providing the orchestral accompaniment to Dvorak's *Mass in D major*, under the baton of Paul Holley. This year the woodwind and horn players of the orchestra also presented Dvorak's *Serenade for Wind* as an adjunct to the weekend's music.

In May, Robert Jackson presented a concert of Mozart; the ever popular *Lark Ascending* with soloist Holly Bennet; local composer, teacher and orchestra member Paul Marshall's *Landscape*; and Camille Saint-Saens *Carnival of the Animals* with Ogden Nash poems. This was a very well received concert despite having to relocate at short notice from Lazenby Hall to the OTC auditorium due to UNE cancelling our booking. Despite the cosiness, the OTC auditorium gave the concert an intimacy which suited the repertoire well.

I would like to thanks all conductors, players and leaders for their contribution to the orchestra in 2017. As I was on leave as President for the second half of the year I would like to sincerely thank the committee and in particular Vice President, Robert Jackson for his leadership and commitment during this time. Robert will present the second half of this report.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we learn today of the death of Errol Russell. Errol was a skilled performer and teacher, and concert master of this orchestra for many years. He generously gave his time for the pursuit of musical excellence and will be sorely missed by his many friends, colleagues and students. We extend our condolences to his family.

Stuart Pavel
ASO President
26 March 2018