

# The Present and The Future

At the end of 2012 I submitted my resignation as General Manager of the Trust and the Board refused, saying I could be a consultant retaining the title of General Manager. When I submitted my resignation, I was looking at the financial outcome for the Trust and could see, if the Independent Theatre sale went through, the work I was doing need not continue. At the same time I felt my remuneration was exacerbating the loss. We negotiated that I continue for a couple of days a week to help find and move into new premises and keep the scholarship program going. The scholarship program had been dormant from 2009 to 2013 and the 2008 GFC had affected the income capacity of the funds so there was not a lot of money to give. Most of the scholarship activity involved decisions and administration for one or two scholars and rejecting most of the other applications.

By 2013 things were improving. We were coming out of the red in our investments and there would be money for scholarships again. I thought one or two days a week would probably be sufficient to handle these, plus the new office, meaning the Trust would be liable for a consultancy fee rather than employment obligations. Financially for the Trust it was a good position to be in and no problem to me. I was looking at other interests that could become part of Trust activities but if the Trust was not interested, I would be able to move in that direction.

In the 2014 draft budget we anticipated \$87,500 of the gross income going to scholarships. The board makes this decision. I can only recommend but feel we should spend around \$100,000 a year in scholarship assistance. Our scholarships are slightly different than others. We do not just give people a cheque. If a scholar goes to the Juilliard Music School, New York, we ask Juilliard to send us the account, we pay it in advance so the scholar knows their fees are paid and they do not have to worry about that. That saves a lot of misunderstandings and allows us to keep track of the scholarship assistance cash flow. A recurrent problem, which has been brought to the directors' attention, is a weak Australian dollar. Most scholars' budgets for a year are done in advance and the rate of exchange can drop substantially after they begin their study. Who wears that? Technically you could say the scholars as they have been given money on the basis of the rate they quoted at the time. That is a bit harsh, especially since we are willing to pay direct for fees whenever it comes in, regardless of the rate of exchange. I believe we should have a contingency for certain circumstances, where we are able to absorb that loss. Small amounts do not make that much difference; a small percentage change does not impact greatly, but more substantial changes need to be considered. My recommendation is that we do not contract to this but take responsibility when something is seriously affected. No one can know what will

happen with the Australian dollar. The main thing is to not stretch resources so far that we do not have the capacity to deal with it, so the annual scholarship amount is considered in this light.

***Classical: NEXT***

We have taken up a proposal to collaborate with the **Australian Music Foundation** in Australia, the UK and USA. It arose from *Classical: NEXT*, a group of people interested in the money attached to classical music, i.e. the record companies. In 2013 they assembled for a talkfest forum to investigate all the new things happening and how classical music was being affected. They were also examining the demise of the classical music financial model. The record companies included *Nexus, Deutsche Gramophone, Warner, and EMI*; all people with an interest in recouping the millions of dollars income lost each year on classical music when it went digital. The first forum was successful in putting out a lot of ideas no-one had thought were going to be relevant. In 2014 I attended the second forum held in the Mak, the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna<sup>1</sup>, not far from the Opera House. People from all over the world participated as presenters. It was like a trade fair with simultaneous meetings and presentations, and refreshment breaks for networking and displays. Record labels, designers, ensembles, were there talking with clients and potential clients or finding sources of supply. Most important were the presentations. I wanted to know – and still do, where we are going to be in five years' time in selling classical music and how are we going to do it. If you look at the past, there has been a decline, in concert halls there is a declining audience.

One paper noted the youngest people at a Berlin Philharmonic concert were in the orchestra. Traditionally it was aged people playing to young people. Now it is reversed and the audience is declining with natural attrition and not being replaced. Why is that audience not being replaced by younger people, what is stopping them from coming? Young people are conducting their lives differently, but that does not mean to say they are not interested in classical music. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Korea was the largest purchaser of classical music in the world. More records were sold there than anywhere else. No one would have thought the Koreans would outstrip the Germans and Americans in terms of record buying. They were buying European records; *Deutsche Gramophone, EMI* product and New York labels. In the 1980s, when CDs came in, people embraced the new technology which required smaller equipment and gave high fidelity to the sound. That took on for a decade. By the 1990s there was a generation who listened to music this way, especially as the pop music industry was very quick to grab that music portability, no longer relying on dance-halls, films or live concerts except to sell their product. The Phil Collins world tour, *No Jacket Required*, was to sell that album in the 1980s. They spent six million pounds on that tour to sell a CD which returned about sixty million in sales.

<sup>1</sup> The Mak, Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, Stubenring, Vienna, was founded in 1863 as the Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry. Besides a traditional orientation towards arts, crafts and design, it especially focusses on Architecture and contemporary art.

By the 1990s a twenty year old consumed music through headphones on a *Walkman* CD, and knew no other way. At age ten they may have remembered dad's vinyl record collection and big speakers, but it was not the sort of thing you could take to a party; you had to bring the party to it. With the advance of technology came mp3, a medium that would digitize the signal, store it in a capacity the size of your thumb and have in it every pop tune you were ever interested in which you could play back in the train or bus. Into the 2000s and the digital phone took off. The mp3 could be transferred to the phone and you could listen to your favourite pop tune or the Berlin Philharmonic playing a Beethoven symphony anywhere. But where is the revenue for the record companies? That is no longer happening and even the supposed modern format of the CD is almost redundant. You can download music, buy it on line, or on *Spotify*, through all of the search engines, onto a computer, laptop or USB. This convention set out to address these issues; the ageing audience and how to keep it for classical music. How to attract younger audiences and how they want to receive it. Demographics play a part in this. A ninety year old might be happy to use an mp3, on the other hand, you would never ask a twenty year old to put on a vinyl record unless it is cool. The convention invited people who had been at the helm of the heyday of classical music to say what they were doing to save the ship from sinking.

One man, from South Korea, the General Manager of the Daiwan Cultural Foundation, had the job of studying classical music and the market in Korea. He gave us some market statistics. In 2000 the record market was at its peak, but by 2010 had declined by 80%. In Korea there are 178 local cultural art centres. They all have contact with artists and offline they deliver by CD, DVD, *Blueray* discs; the normal way as we understand today but digitally they have several search engines and mobile facilities, the programs SKT, KT, LET. In shops they deliver music digitally as background music as a service and they are within the top ten countries in the world. In this digital environment they produced \$211 million worth of revenue in 2013, the year before this conference, whilst their record market had declined by 80%. The record market as we know it, understand and love, is diminishing fast and everyone is getting out.

### **The Digital Market**

The digital market is in huge growth. In 'social media use' statistics, 75% of girls and 60% of boys use social media, ages twelve and thirteen represent 52% of the social media users and ages fourteen to seventeen are the remainder of the social media users. The music industry is looking to social media to get its message across. At the 2014 *Classical: NEXT* Conference it was revealed that there had been a test of teenage interest in classical music. A member of a government initiative from Brazil gave a paper on her research. She arranged with three nightclub owners to have classical music played at a certain time. They kept the nightclub just as it was, drinks

at the bar, kids milling around, plenty of noise, high volume, and then a string quartet would come on in the middle of the night and play. The quartet was briefed not to dumb it down, not to reduce the quality of their performance but were asked not to present formally, so they turned up in jeans and T-shirts. They were not much older than the people in the room listening. It was an amazing success. Right in the middle of all of this hotbed of nightclubbing was a string quartet playing. She said the moment they started playing the whole room went silent until they finished. The performances sold out except for one when Paul McCartney was playing in town at the same time. I asked if it was real or just because it was a novelty. She considered it genuine interest; it was late at night yet patrons were sitting on the floor in front of a cellist playing a Bach suite, mesmerized, enraptured; none of them had heard classical music before. There were many incidents like that.

A common factor seems to be that young people do not want the stuffiness of a concert hall, seated formally and behaving in a particular way. If they do not want to sit still, it does not mean they do not want to hear the music. There were some tests done on people listening that found the attention span is about two seconds on a mobile device and a lot of young people are now switching from program to program and some have two devices going at the same time. They have a talk-back going on during the concert and they are switching between the two, then they will switch away to something else briefly and come back to the concert. They are constantly moving round hand-held devices, telephones mostly. They want access to their music, and for young people it is about access instantly and under their control. Going to a concert at 8pm in Carnegie Hall, which comes out at 10.30pm is not control. They may be on the other side of the country in Los Angeles but they still want to experience the concert. Marketing is showing this audience is there, interested and passionate, but you need it to be on their terms and taking a concert into the nightclub worked because it was on their terms. They were there, they did not have to worry about it; they listened and had a good time. It would not matter whether it is Beethoven or Schoenberg, you will get them.

One person at the conference has devised an electronic program and device, where you can put visual patterns of the music up on a screen on the wall before the music plays. It comes in front of the music, so a big chord that is designed by the composer to shock you or astound you suddenly comes up with a visual screen that looks like that. A soft lyrical line comes up with a wave with gentle promotions. You can hold the device in your hand and play Beethoven 5. With every bar there is a visual. I think this is an English innovation and all those using it are young, under thirty and interested in the technology. The fact that they are listening to Beethoven or Brahms is of no consequence to them; it is music as far as they are concerned. They do not need to hear just pop music, although they can hear their pop music in the same way. This demonstrated

there were mediums for getting classical music to young people and building a young audience and that is where the growth is. With regard to discussion about the ageing audience, there have been many experiments to build interest in contemporary music. Programming familiar pieces with contemporary works just keeps them away or leaving at interval. John Gilhooly, Artistic and Executive Director, gave a paper on the Wigmore Hall model, addressing that question.

In 2013 Wigmore Hall did 400 concerts, taking 160,000 euro and selling 200,000 tickets. The hall has identified that aged patrons will not change so the programs have to be what they want. They present a major concert for the traditional audience at the normal time, 7pm, and at 11pm have a late concert for young people with different music and that tends to work. They use social media to market and find *Twitter* is more popular with the older and *Facebook* is more popular with the young. So concert promoters and venues are finding ways to use the new social media, and technology to get their message to dual audiences, one old, one young. Wigmore Hall is a good example. We need to be part of this. There are no definitive answers that you have to do this or that, but there were plenty of ideas and people implementing them successfully and some not so successfully. What everyone has recognized is that young people should not be written off. They are interested if you find a way to reach them on their terms and once reached, they have the best spending power. Musicians themselves have to be more flexible, to move with this facility, and it was Gilhooly who said he advises any young musician to set up a website at the beginning of their career, otherwise work will not be forthcoming no matter how good they are.

The computer, whether we like it or not, is going to control our revenue and it is going to mean young people have to come to terms with it. There are some very positive and successful initiatives going on using new technology to get classical music across but also education of the musician must be part of this. We are giving money for people to go away and study. This is not undergraduate money. These are people who are really finished; this is just putting the icing on the cake. In the 1930s, if you were Fritz Kreisler or someone like that, you had good tutelage, you got an agent and a record company, you made a record, and you were working with all the orchestras and became famous for what you did for the rest of your life. That model is finished but there are still people like Fritz Kreisler coming out of the education institutions and great players streaming out in their hundreds from institutions. They cannot all teach in schools or privately.

Most of the funds we give are for people to do postgraduate work, who are fine-tuning technique and presentation. We should try to go to the next step. What happens when they finish postgraduate study? They have to come to terms with the new way of getting their message out. Who will help them understand the social media if they do not already know it? Who will help them understand the technology, which is changing so fast even technicians do

not understand it. Who will help them present themselves in a manner that is appealing to young and old audiences? Where are they going to do all this and how? They have spent the last ten, twenty years practising their instruments and are good, but they have not spent any time on these fundamentally critical things which will involve classical musicians in the next decade.

### **The Mentor Program**

I felt we should try to develop what is simplistically called the Mentor Program. It will be much more complex than that, but a mentor program should take a person by the hand and guide them through this minefield of information so they can understand John Gilhooly's advice. Get not just a website but a good website so that you survive and your little trio will still be working in ten years' time. How do you get that, how do you administer it? Once you have it, it is not enough. You still have to administer it, put material on it. What sort of material and to what audience? Someone has to help them, not tell them how. It is logical that you have to show them a way in which this can be done. There should be a mentor program set up which encompasses all of these things. It cannot be done from one organization in one geographical location like the Trust in Sydney, but it can be done if there were representatives in say Sydney, London, Geneva, New York and Tokyo. If there were representatives who would work as a network so when a scholar comes to New York they can pick up assistance from that person or group and be shown how to tap into New York audiences, orchestras or ensembles.

### **The Australian Music Foundation and Arts Global**

**The Australian Music Foundation** was set up in London some years ago, designed to assist Australian musicians in the UK. I talked with them about this concept and they were interested in joining with us. At the same time, there was another organization called **Arts Global** which had been mentoring but not to the same degree. They were taking a person, grooming them, introducing them to agents, finding a venue for them to play in and getting a concert for them, getting some marketing assistance, and also going to the point of finding some funding to pay the costs of Wigmore Hall or Carnegie Hall, but no further than that. They had about ten people already under their program, not only Australians. The former chair, and one of the key influences on the Australian Music Foundation, lives in Switzerland and travelled to London to attend board meetings. She resigned as Board chair, so my dialogue with her stopped. It revived recently with the appointment, to chair, of Yvonne Kenny, who is dynamic, very interested and keen on the things we are talking about. She is a very good advocate of Australian music and a successful Australian singer. The intention is to try and pursue whatever we can along these lines but it is early days and we have to find funding, probably the most important thing at this stage. It has been decided to continue conferences every year in Europe.

It was good to attend to understand what the issues are, how young we are in addressing those issues and how much further we have to go. Change is very rapid to the next breakthrough. We have to keep an eye on it and that is part of the role of the mentor program. No-one can crystal gaze but there are some interesting developments on the horizon and unlike the doom merchants who said classical music is dead, the orchestras are too young and the aged audiences are disappearing, there are other audiences and classical music will survive because it is what it is. It has substance and these kids in a nightclub could hear a Beethoven quartet or Bach solo cello work, the substance in the music captivated them without them knowing anything about music. They are the great audiences.

### Som Howie's Experience

Young Australian musicians are coming forward like clarinettist Som Howie who has moved into the next stage of his career. After a European summer school with his teacher, he returned to audition for the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a program called **Foyle's Future Firsts** where sixteen people are selected and given a tutelage program. They are all potential first players for the wind sections. He has the only clarinet spot sitting in rehearsals behind the first player, having access to the experience of top players. Som has emerged as a potentially fine contributor to music as well as getting himself a decent job. He will need help to take on the workload of electronic material and new technology while practicing and playing his clarinet. He may understand it all but he will not be able to capitalize on it unless someone helps him. He is a perfect example of a need for a follow-on program. He is not an isolated case; there are many like him. I was invited to adjudicate musicians for an award by the Australian Music Foundation, with a finalists' concert in the Wigmore Hall. Among them was an exceptional young guitarist from Canberra, with superb musicianship, very good technique. All she needs is an opportunity to be at the front line of classical guitar playing. If we do not do something no one else is going to do it for them, maybe their agent if they are lucky, but the agent will have vested interests and most likely looks after the income, not the development. Development is the future. They have to be prepared for what is going to happen technologically in another five or ten years.

I am hopeful the Trust and Australian Music Foundation will join forces to do good things in the future. I cannot see myself retiring. Even if I was not working with the Trust, I would want to be involved if possible in helping this program. I have a fair understanding of technology, how fast it changes and why and how it can be harnessed to help performance. The Trust is a national arts body concerned with the arts in Australia. This area has a narrow focus. It is about musicians on the international stage but they are Australian musicians and they equate to artistic excellence being represented in the wider community. That is important and it is an initiative the



Som Howie, clarinettist

Trust should take on. I believe from my experiences and my attendance at the *Classical: NEXT* that young people accessing music want a holistic outcome. They want something to look at, to be affected by the atmosphere as well as the music. They do not want to study the work and hear Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* in the concert hall and hear how well it is played and how authentic the interpretation is. That is only a small part of their thinking, if they are even interested in that. They will go provided it is an experience. It is not music you appreciate as an audience or as an intellectual, it is using music in your life to achieve outcomes and I think that is probably what will be the underlying theme.

I had a property in the Barrington Tops, about 4 hectares, which was superb land. The neighbour on one side had 324 hectares and the other had 162 hectares. Both had been there for a long time; the one with 324 ha, his family was one of the original families in the area. When I met him he was in his late sixties and had been a traditional farmer but for one thing. The one with the 162 ha acres was an old man in his seventies who had been farming all his life. His concept was to burn the paddock and wait for the reviving grass and then each year there would be a burn to just get rid of it. The neighbour on the other side was the opposite. He would not do anything destructive or add any chemicals to his land. He used to plant by moon cycles and with a cow horn in the ground and they thought he was crazy.

I was there during one of the most amazing droughts ever experienced, no water at all, but we were on the Allyn River, which was a profuse source of very good water. The chap on the 324 ha property was growing *Simmental* cattle and taking these fine animals to market and getting top dollar for them. The cattle that left the other guy's property were poorly and he was getting rid of them to get them off the land, taking whatever he could get for them. So there were two extremes and when you looked at the plots of land they were two extremes as well. I was in the middle of these two elderly people who had vastly different views on how to farm land and both of them with a heritage of farming back to the early days of the settlement. The chap with 324 ha knew I was interested in music and told me about the land that I had. He was proud I was not putting any chemicals on it, because there had not been any chemicals there for at least forty years. We had horses and the grazing was very good. When he was about to plant a lucerne paddock he advised he wanted a blooming plant so he planted it to music. He had a large modern *John Deere* tractor with two speakers on the back and a power unit in it. He asked for some music to plant by. He had been listening to my music and pointed to a couple of things which were mostly Bach, not large orchestral works but lighter string works. I recorded some ninety minutes on cassette, and he put it in his tractor, ploughed the ground and laid the seed down, with the music playing. In the paddock adjourning it, as an experiment he planted the same crop, without music. When it came time to harvest, the one with the music was flourishing. It was astounding.



Maybe there was something else involved and I do not know much about agriculture but I do know I saw both paddocks start from bare soil and this beautiful paddock at harvest time several months later. From that point on he vowed he would always plant with music on the back of his tractor and it was all classical music. I would love some scientific evidence to support that. He was an outstanding pastoralist, perhaps. He was certainly successful and his family believed in organic methods. He gave a field day at the Tocal agricultural college every year where he would discuss his hydroponics and growing tomatoes. The tomatoes he brought with the hydroponics were superb so there must be something in it.

### Finding a New Home for the Trust

When the Trust came on the market to find a place to move to at the end of 2013, the question was whether to buy or rent. For once the Trust was in a solid financial position and able to consider purchase. Whatever we purchased was going to be on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee, 60 years of the Trust and should be a space in which we could keep the records and show this was an organization that had survived good and bad times, and had come forward elegantly, ready to face new challenges, whatever they were, in a firm and consolidated manner. An office in the city was not my image of what the Trust would be. We looked at places on the north side, accessible for the chairman Lloyd Waddy. The place we finally took up in Neutral Bay was a mess but had great potential with windows all around it. It sat on top of two companies representing the new things in our society, *Dick Smith* electronics and *Bose* high quality audio. It seemed a good omen. There were two first floor suites available which we gutted completely. With the help of an interior designer we designed a welcoming office space to do the things I hoped for and also prepare for the future. Apart from its handwritten records, the Trust has other treasures such as *The Tintookies* puppets. We designed a circular display wall for such items with lights above. There are about twenty or thirty boxes of material relating to the marionettes. We have performance tapes<sup>2</sup> and scripts and could put a show together if we had puppeteers with



Above: The three stars from Peter Scriven's original Tintookies: Panjee Possum, Wilpy Wombat and Krumpy Koala.  
Opposite: (Top) The Magic Pudding and Bill Barnacle; (Bottom) Bunyip Bluegum.

<sup>2</sup> This is a link to a sound file, narrated by Antony Jeffrey, from a CD collection produced by Warwick Ross for the Trust's 50th anniversary in 2004. It includes an extract from Justin McDonnell's oral history interview which describes Peter Scriven, the company's relationship with the Trust and the presentation of Australian stories through *The Tintookies*. It includes an extract from performance tapes in The Trust Archive of the 1966 production of *The Magic Pudding*.

experience to work them. The puppets need careful maintenance. There are also set models from early opera productions in storage at the **Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation** next door. Much of the Trust archive is in the National Library. We also have material here and in storage which needs to be organized and listed by an experienced archivist, a job yet to be done. In addition we have all the records from our time at the Independent also uncategorized. A treasure trove of theatre history. We receive some research enquiries such as one from the University of Tasmania, on *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*<sup>3</sup>: a researcher was looking at the material in the National Library and permission to use and copy it.

With our experience of acoustics we tried to keep the walls from being parallel in that area so we could have a meeting space, give small performances and soirees and invite people to talk about things they may be interested in helping us with. With my knowledge of acoustics and the potential future for online music communication, we wanted a space to be involved in this with minimal upgrade. It needed to be acoustically sound, isolated as best as possible from the rest of the building, and adaptable to be a broadcast studio, or for live communication, including performance. I can see the day when a soloist would go into that small room and play with an orchestra in New York. It would be done electronically and the final visual would be put together and no one would ever know when looking at it that the soloist was not playing in the same location as the orchestra. We also had a *Stuart* piano, and wanted an elegant place to show it. We had a raised floor made that floated, for the piano to sit on. It is an opportunity to show people where we have come from, where we might go and to invite people to talk with us in comfort and share visions for the future. We have a perfect space in the middle to put a large credenza to store files which has been almost completely filled without effort! In addition, there are six offices around the perimeter of the building so we can function administratively. It represents a good investment, bought at a reasonable price. On the Trust balance sheet it is a healthy asset and can be sold as two titles if necessary. To date we have had concerts presented by our scholars before they go to study. We have had Annual General Meetings at which some of our scholars played. It is a friendly atmosphere and provides opportunity for them to show off where they are musically. In one instance, a scholar needed to attract attention from another source of funds and we invited that person who enjoyed the concert. It resulted in a grant of \$10,000 for the purchase of an instrument. The space is there for anyone who is interested in helping music.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, classic Australian play by Ray Lawler, first presented by the Australian Drama Company under the auspices of the Trust in March 1956.

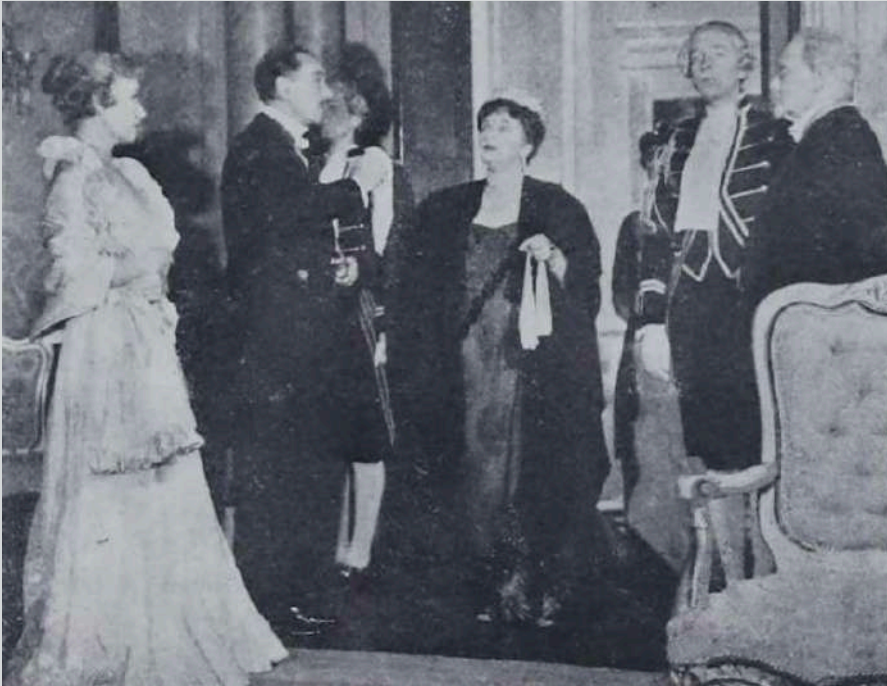
**The Trust in 2019**

The Trust Board has evolved greatly over the years. Initially a large group of people but today it is much smaller. Two current members, Lloyd Waddy (Chair) and Brian Larking, joined the Board in the mid-1970s and have provided great stability and continuity. Both put personal funds into the Trust to get it back from the Administrator in the 1990s and have been stalwart supporters. We have downsized staff to a consultant two days a week. When extra help is needed, it is called for. When I was a member of the Orchestra, one of the big problems was the Trust was too big. It had a board with directors in every state who focussed on their own state's needs. This was a problem for a national organization and for the Orchestras. To service that governance there were offices with staff appropriate to need. When I came back to the Trust as Administrator of Orchestras there were about thirty-two people working for the Trust. I had my own set of challenges with the Tribe Report and the Orchestras, so just had to get on with it. At that time I needed a secretary to communicate to the two line managements based in different states and they needed people on the ground at the performance point to run the Orchestra and do administration. When I came back to take on the General Manager role, there was no real need for staff given most work was computer based. What is necessary in this organization now is the expert of the day to deal with current matters governed by a very small group of people who are prepared to contribute. We now have a board who are very willing to contribute. The members have specific skills which can be brought to bear on a problem and they all have the understanding, maturity and experience to know not to manage from the boardroom. The chairman lets me make management decisions within the policies they set. I have believed since my days with *Edgleys*, that if you are in charge of something and cannot do it yourself, you are not going to be able to manage it. I am focused now on what I understand best of all, the development of music, helping players and spotting players needing assistance at an early stage and finding a way to help them. I can bring additional skills with my background in audio and law. The governors are very good policymakers.

From the Vienna Conference, I have taken on board new technology. We have to address it. There were several instances of music being stored in the Cloud and accessed through digital devices. The board decided we would move to a Cloud based accounting system and our accountants and auditors selected a system. It is cost effective and limits the need for employees and their management.

**2015 Diamond Jubilee Year**

In 2015 the Trust celebrated its Diamond Jubilee year, quite a milestone. The Trust was formed in 1954; and incorporated on September 29th. Naturally, it did not do anything immediately



*The Sleeping Prince*, Elizabethan Theatre, Newtown—1955.

because it had to gather a chief executive officer, funds and an office. This resulted in taking on the Elizabethan Theatre, Newtown, and with the help of the *Garnet H Carroll Organization* they shared the presentation of *The Sleeping Prince* by Terence Rattigan on July 27th 1955.

The very first individual promotion the Trust presented was *Medea* with the first company it established, the Australian Drama Company. It opened at the Albert Hall, Canberra, on October 5th 1955. In October 2015 at the Trust offices in Neutral Bay, we invited guests to celebrate our 60th anniversary. These included strong supporters of the Trust over the years, both in their own right and as financiers. Some of our scholars played for a musical soiree. The other event was a concert by *Refraction*, which included myself and Ronald Thomas and given in July 2014 at the Independent. We played Beethoven's *Septet* and a Mendelssohn piano work with William Chen. We gave assistance to

the *Seraphim Trio* to go and study the Beethoven series of trios, which they performed as part of our Diamond Jubilee. Another thing to mark the Diamond Jubilee was providing funds for the **Geelong Youth Classical Music Competition** in 2015.

The Trust has long term supporters and members and tax deductibility remains in place for their donations. There is a public appeal every year to the members, of which there are about 560 across the country, mostly in New South Wales. The appeal usually results in a small amount of money but it is consistent each year, generally from the same people. In the days when membership numbered 10,000, people were members to gain access to the shows the Trust was involved with and to get access to opening nights, and special events. Those left on our membership list are not young people; they are mostly members who became life members when offered in the late 1980s. There are still a few members from the 1950s. Most people, when you talk about the Trust, are surprised to learn it still exists. We have not actively promoted it. It costs money to publicize and put on events and we prefer to give money to musicians for study.

The Annual General Meetings are small scale events and some attend to show their continuing support for our work. We have a consistent donor who has been giving to us annually for as long as I have been here as General Manager. She recently wrote:

I have pleasure in enclosing my donation to the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. I hope it in some small way enables you to continue with the wonderful tasks carried out by your organization.

That kind of thought comes from many of our members; it is not lip service.

### **Working for the Trust**

Considering the impact the Trust has had on my life is an interesting question. Until I came to the Trust as orchestral administrator in 1986 I had been without a regular income. All my working life until then I had been freelance, without the benefit of a regular income or the knowledge that I would be able to pay monthly bills. When my daughter Frances was born in 1992, I had just left the Trust administration job, which was the first job I had. It could not have been at a worse time because I needed a regular income to look after her. My wife had some part time work as a receptionist but did not have a career. The financial burden was on my shoulders and there was no way to avoid it. That prompted me to put my head down with the legal studies and get back to a regular income. When I returned to the Trust, in 1999, Frances was eight years old. It was very difficult financially getting through that eight years and getting her into schooling. I wanted her to have the maximum opportunity. The Hunter Valley Grammar School was close to home and likely to deliver what was necessary. It was costly and I had difficulty in finding the annual fees plus the costs of the house in Maitland, without a job for 8 years. When the Trust job came up I was relieved. She was getting to a critical time in her education where resources

Participants in the 2018 Geelong Youth Classical Music Competition.



were needed. She had started the piano at six years of age, which she loved. She chose of her own volition to take up the piano and drop dance lessons at which she had excelled. By the time I came back to the Trust and had a regular income, she was ready to do weekly lessons, on top of schoolwork. She did very well and got scholarships along the way for the schooling as well, so she contributed in her own way. She went to university in 2010 and began a combined arts/law degree, then dropped the law component and finished the arts component. In 2012, she decided to take on the piano permanently. I was still at the Trust as an employee. It had provided me with the income to get her to that point: she had a degree and potential as a pianist, if it could be explored. There is not much more I could do and I was grateful for that.

Frances knew about the Trust scholarship program and decided she wanted to study with William Chen<sup>4</sup> in China in 2014. She needed that move because there were aspects of her technical playing which were raw, needed to be processed and guided. William was the right person to do that. I had managed to save up enough funds to cover a little over half of her costs but the rest she had to find from elsewhere. I could not be involved in the scholarship program here because of my vested interest, so Frances wrote directly to the Trust chairman requesting a scholarship. He sent it out for assessment by Gerard Willems. It came back positive and the board approved a scholarship for her. Armed with the Trust scholarship and my funds, she went to China. After a year in Shanghai with William Chen, Frances relocated her study to France to focus on accompaniment. She is undertaking a postgraduate diploma at the University Conservatorium in Lyon. She also receives tuition from a specialist Australian accompanist, David Selig, who teaches accompaniment at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse.

Frances and I have played together and I continue to play the bass whenever I can. My work at the Trust is flexible, not always contained within the two days at the office, but I consider it important I keep informed and involved in the music business which helps me function better as a consultant. I practise because I want to continue playing. I was called at short notice and with no rehearsal, to play the Bach *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6*. I also played in Sydney Independent Opera's *Tosca* performance and for *The Magic Flute*, so there is some work and I enjoy it. My partner, Suzy Borrett, is a violinist, violist and teacher, responsible for most of the good viola players around at the moment and we want to play together. She has played with Ron Thomas in his chamber music group, *Refraction*. Both of us have backgrounds in England. She was a free-lance player there for twenty years, playing the violin mostly, with the Philharmonia Orchestra and other groups. We would like access to friends in Europe to play music with. If the music mentoring program develops, it may be advantageous for me to be in Europe.



Pianist and Trust scholar, William Chen.

<sup>4</sup> William Chen, born in China, grew up in Sydney, was an inaugural Trust scholar who undertook his Masters of Performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London. He has performed solo recitals internationally and with the chamber group, *Refraction*, as part of the Trust's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2014. He is a Professor of Piano at Shanghai Conservatorium of Music.

I do not like administrative work, but it has to be done and I am not about to build an empire so I do it myself, which takes time. Everything from the Trust's point of view is transparent, legitimate and well documented, which is what you need when managing these funds. Reflecting on my time with the Trust, I had the opportunity and time to grow in the job. I think all of us who have been involved with the Trust have come in relatively inexperienced, certainly not experts in the field which we were thrown into and we have learnt to grow in the job.

Thinking back to the people who set up and developed companies that became independent of the Trust, many like Moffatt Oxenbould, Artistic Director of Opera Australia (1984-1999), started with the Trust as an Opera Company assistant. Along the way he equipped himself with knowledge, experience and capability. I learnt a great deal through managing the Orchestras. Having been a player, I learnt a lot, not all of it good, but necessary for the management of a body of orchestral musicians. There was no textbook, or lecturer to advise what to do in certain situations or when faced with difficult options. We woke up each day to problems which had to be solved. On one occasion we were in the middle of an opera season with Stuart Challender<sup>5</sup> conducting. I remember Charles O'Neill, a tuba player in the Sydney Orchestra, under fire from Opera Company conductors for his standard of playing. He had been given counselling and advice to improve. Charles's partner was a nurse who believed she had terminal cancer. They decided to suicide and gassed themselves to death. Before the morning rehearsal was due to start, I was telephoned and told that he was dead. After going to his house which was closed off by the police, I had to tell the Orchestra 15 minutes before the call. This was something for which I had no training or experience. There is a specialized technique to handle this sort of problem. Like many in the Orchestra of sixty-odd people, I had associated with Charlie O'Neill from day one in the orchestra. We were all colleagues, whether close friends or drinking companions. Stuart advised me to tell the players and he would gauge what to do in relation to the rehearsal. Fifteen minutes into the call he cancelled the rehearsal, suggesting everyone go home for the rest of the day. That was tough learning on the job and I hope not to have to do something like that again.

There were good learning experiences too. The Independent Theatre project was wonderful. I had been an audio engineer and studied the design and development of acoustic areas in preparation for the mobile audio recordings truck. I had been involved in the recording business as player and producer, so knew what the standards were. All of that was brought to bear on the development of the Independent. As a player I knew what musicians like to have on stage and where the acoustic areas were, what the problems were, and how they can be solved. That was

<sup>5</sup> Stuart Challender, AO (1947-1991), Australian conductor who studied at Victorian Conservatorium of Music and was director of the Victorian Opera Company. He is remembered particularly for his work with the Australian Opera, the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

not textbook stuff, it was all in the job. Several jobs all brought to bear into one, so in retrospect I think people who have been associated with the Trust have been people who have had the capacity to learn in the job and have gone on to contribute in their own right. When I look back at it, that is the thing the Trust has done for many people in Australia, it has touched the professional careers of most people working in the arts.

