

# Senza Sord

DECEMBER 2016

## THE RING CYCLE

**FAREWELL HOWARD**

NEW ZEALAND  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
**CULTURE SWAP**

WASO

**ABU DHABI/CHINA  
TOUR DIARY**

**CONCERTMASTER  
DENE OLDING**

IN CONVERSATION  
**HOWARD MANLEY**



soma

A MEAA Member





# Senza Sord

DECEMBER 2016

## Contents

<b>Overture</b> Tania Hardy Smith	2
<b>Farewell Howard</b> Colleagues pay tribute to Howard Manley	3
<b>In conversation</b> Howard Manley and Simon Collins	11
<b>Culture swap</b> Lyndsay Mountfort	18
<b>Blogging the Ring Cycle</b> Damien Eckersley	22
<b>WASO Abu Dhabi/China Tour Diary</b> Julia Brooke	26
<b>ICSOM Conference 2016</b> Mark Bruwel	32
<b>Funding for Australian Orchestras – an overview</b> Howard Manley	34
<b>Concertmaster Emeritus</b> Dene Olding	36

<b>Orchestra reports</b>	39
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra	39
Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra	40
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	41
Orchestra Victoria	42
Queensland Symphony Orchestra	44
Sydney Symphony Orchestra	45
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra	46
West Australian Symphony Orchestra	47
New Zealand Symphony Orchestra	48
<b>SOMA Executive Meeting</b>	49
<b>Final note</b> Vale: Stephen Phillips	50

Cover: Scene from The Ring, Götterdämmerung.  
Photo Jeff Busby

Left: Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra with Monika Bohinec, Stuart Skelton and Nina Stemme taking their bows with Chief Conductor Marko Letonja.  
Photo Alistair Bett

# Overture

**Tania Hardy Smith**

Orchestra Victoria

Hi everyone

This edition of *Senza Sord* acknowledges two significant events in our orchestral landscape – the Ring Cycle in Melbourne and Howard's retirement. Having enjoyed the Ring so much more than last time, I know I'm not the only person who will be sad to get to the end. It's been an extraordinary experience and I hope we get the chance to do it again in three years time.

And we all knew that at some point Howard would hang up his dancing shoes, but to have the moment finally upon us has rightly elicited many accolades from all over the country. We farewelled Howard at a fine dinner a couple of weeks ago and presented him with a cymbal engraved with the words "To Howard, in acknowledgement and appreciation of 18 years service to Australian Orchestras and musicians through the Symphony Orchestra Musicians' Association – Great Cities Have Great Orchestras".

From my perspective, what Howard has gradually done is help translate the passion and steadfastness of our professional players into well-articulated value – for our culture, our communities and our economy. He has been an educator and an enabler and we are all in debt to him for that. My more personal view is that Howard has literally been our rock

in negotiations, particularly during the very difficult years when Orchestra Victoria looked like it wouldn't survive. There were so many times we went into negotiations, or meetings with management or review panels, when I would be so incredibly grateful Howard was there. It didn't matter who was in the room – he was always better than anyone and he was on our side.

We will all miss you Howard but there will be an imperative to catch up from time to time – the orchestras owe it to you to stick around!

Most of you will know that the Report of the Opera Review has been handed down. You can read the full report at [https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1761/f/national\\_opera\\_review\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1761/f/national_opera_review_final_report.pdf)

Thanks to all our SOMA representatives who have helped steer many orchestras through the year – your work is very much appreciated. I would also like to thank all our wonderful contributors to this edition – as usual there are some terrific stories in here!

Finally, I'd like to wish everyone all the very best for the Christmas season and the New Year 2017. And if you're on holiday, enjoy!

Tania

# FAREWELL HOWARD

Colleagues pay tribute to Howard in acknowledgement of 18 years of service to Australian orchestras and musicians through the Symphony Orchestra Musicians' Association

It is coincidental that Howard Manley is retiring in 2016 as SOMA's National Officer.

About eighteen years ago Howard was appointed by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance to handle the day-to-day affairs and industrial relations on behalf of SOMA musicians. It is coincidental because it is now exactly 50 years ago that the first seeds were sown arising from the discontent amongst orchestral musicians which led to the development and formation of SOMA as we know it today.

Those were turbulent years and involved restructuring of viable relations with the Musicians' Union or deposing its old guard – at that time tied in with the National Civic Council. The orchestras ran state and federal union election campaigns and tried by every means possible to restructure and work within the existing union.

But relations deteriorated and at the declaration of one of the NSW branch elections the defeated officers refused to accept the result and we were concerned that records of deeds and misdeeds would be shredded. So armed with the poll declaration and sledgehammers we went to take the office late that night, change the locks and put on a security guard. But in the face of clear, unequivocal determination and an official poll declaration one of the staff surrendered a spare set of keys and deprived us of a moment of high drama.

The Musicians' Union officials dragged some of our own orchestral reps through the courts and threw our own union money at our own people to reinforce their legalistic intimidation and harassment. This included a defamation action against one of us which would certainly have failed but the action was backed by the funds of the union whereas the cost of defence was \$50,000 out of our private pockets.





*Howard Manley and Lachlan Bramble ASO Violin*

Against this turbulent background Howard was the first appointment to the newly registered SOMA branch of the MEAA.

For us he was the light at the end of a very long tunnel. He brought a cool understanding of the job to be done and pursued this with a focused understanding of the history of the creation of the position he now held. Some ruffled feathers still needed smoothing down and he was the man for the job.

He has served us well in the spirit and harmony of the driving force of what SOMA represents.

It has been a real pleasure to know him. We are sorry to see him leave and certainly wish him all the very best for his time ahead.

### **Martin Foster**

Principal Contrabassoon (retired)  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Howard and I first became acquainted in 1977. SOMA was in its infancy, having recently left the Musicians' Union. Howard made a huge impression by his understated, calm and considered approach to the position. He took the time to listen and value the idiosyncrasies and culture of each orchestra and workplace. This resulted in him being able to truly guide and represent the orchestral and opera musicians of Australia.

During my time as SOMA President, Howard was a constant and greatly trusted mentor. Howard's extensive workplace knowledge along with his clear sighted, determined and unrelenting perspectives led to many successful negotiations and outcomes.

Howard is one of my "Heroes in Life". He is one of SOMA's greatest advocates. I have carried one of his sayings with me for years – "Lawrie, it's time to take a deep breath and swim to the other side of the pool!"

I wish Howard all that he aspires to in his retirement. Good luck and many, many



*The elders of SOMA –  
Lawrie Jacks (retired)  
MSO, WASO and  
TSO, John Jones  
(retired) OV and MSO  
and Martin Foster  
(retired) SSO*

thanks for your marvellous work on behalf of the SOMA membership.

### **Lawrie Jacks**

Principal Viola (retired)  
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra  
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra  
West Australian Symphony Orchestra  
SOMA President 1999-2005

---

I first came to hear the name Howard Manley at committee meetings of the Musicians' Union, Melbourne Branch. At the time, it was proposed that small unions should amalgamate into larger organisations which would have more weight. MEAA and the Musicians' Union obviously had synergistic potential.

The possibility of amalgamation was discussed at Committee meetings without much progress. Month after month I heard the name Howard Manley. After several months of this, I began to wonder who was this giant who seemed to inspire such awe.

Finally I was surprised to meet a normal human being. I have been charmed by Howard's unfailing civility. Howard in SOMA pretty quickly learned about music as it is experienced in symphony orchestras. Howard in my view possesses a high level of intelligence. More than most, Howard has been able to show both sides in our workplace negotiations that there are common interests, and 'win win' is not simply rhetoric. I think the orchestra branches in SOMA have benefited greatly from Howard's guidance. He is one of those special people around the Union movement whose dedication is well above and beyond the call.

Howard, enjoy retirement. You well deserve it.

### **John Jones**

Associate Principal Flute (retired)  
Elizabethan Melbourne Orchestra (now Orchestra Victoria)  
Second Flute  
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, 1974-2006

As Chief Executive of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) I have had the great pleasure of working with Howard over the past eight years. During this time I have found Howard to be not only an outstanding advocate for the musicians he serves, but also a thoughtful, strategic voice for the long term sustainability of the sector. His ability to build relationships on all sides of the political landscape is remarkable, as is his record in prosecuting the case of the intrinsic value of an orchestra to its community (Great Cities have Great Orchestras). Also impressive has been his ability to adapt to the changing nature of the world that orchestras inhabit, and to ensure that SOMA not only remained relevant but an essential part of this new world.

All of us at WASO commend Howard on an outstanding career and wish him all the very best in his retirement.

### **Craig Whitehead**

Chief Executive  
West Australian Symphony Orchestra

---

They say that you can only know the true character of a person once you've seen how they behave in a crisis. Just on three years ago Howard and OV's player reps spent many months battling through OV's latest and perhaps most threatening crisis. As I'm sure anyone who has had the privilege of working with him will attest that even at the darkest times Howard seemed to always strike the right balance between passion for the cause and achievable outcome; between support when you think you've done all you can, and encouragement when there's more to be done.

Howard's intelligence, insight and calmness made him wonderful colleague to have in your corner in a fight. He has been "instrumental" in establishing a secure future for us at OV.

From all of us, have a great second life Howard. You really deserve it!

### **Stephen Robinson**

Principal Oboe  
Orchestra Victoria

---

The AOBO joined SOMA in 1999 following our resignation from the Musicians' Union of Australia. One of the major attractions of the SOMA model was having an industrial officer that dealt solely with symphony orchestras. Howard Manley was that officer and he brought a calm, common sense, pragmatic approach to our EB negotiations and the inevitable industrial dramas. If I were to pick a single quality from his considerable palette of abilities it would have to be his patience. Howard could bring the parties back to the relevant point time and time again without causing offence, often for hours at a stretch. For anyone who has been in face to face negotiations this is a real skill and Howard made it look all too easy.

### **Pete Jenkin**

Principal Clarinet  
Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra

---

I've known Howard since I first became involved as SOMA rep for the TSO around fifteen years ago at a time when we had only 6 or 7 members of SOMA in the orchestra. I've always valued Howard's clear thinking, his vast knowledge of our orchestras and how they work and his ability to get you to see what's important. As with all reps, many a time have I been on the phone to him to talk through an issue and he has always been able to perfectly present all the points of view and offer guidance on various approaches to enable a solution that works for us.



Of course, helping us with our workplaces is only part of the story. Howard's contribution as an advocate for the orchestral sector to all levels of government has been hugely significant. The musicians of the TSO would like to thank Howard for all his hard work and wish him all the very best for the years to come.

### **Matt Goddard**

SOMA Executive  
Principal Timpani  
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

---

As Hunter S. Thompson wrote "The Music Industry is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side." A lifetime pursuing your passion in the music profession will inevitably result in challenging encounters with these less salubrious elements of the industry. We have been privileged that Howard has had our back for so long, fighting tirelessly on our behalf and creating a decent and viable future for musicians in this wonderful yet archaic country.

### **Geoff Viking Lierse**

(formerly) Orchestra Victoria, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

---

It is indeed the passing of an era as our much loved and respected Howard Manley reaps the fruits of his many fine years of labour as our National SOMA Officer.

My personal perspective on Howard's contribution in upholding our working conditions and his magnificent work with the SSO, have been enhanced enormously as a result of seeing things now from my view as orchestral President. Prior to this my impressions of Howard were more along the lines of him

being the SOMA guy who sorted stuff out when things got serious around the orchestra and management, particularly around Enterprise Bargaining time.

Having been for the first time now intimately involved with our current EB deliberations, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been given the opportunity to gain a much more comprehensive appreciation of Howard. I have appreciated his level of understanding and attention to detail in dealing with complex issues, his tenacity, his understanding of the value of plain common sense ( his use of the 'pub test' as an indication of the realistic value of an idea is simple, but inspired! ) and his sense of humour – a necessary and greatly valued quality.

We have all benefited from his wealth of corporate knowledge, his wisdom in matters of negotiation and his awareness of knowing when things "just aren't going to cut it". He leaves behind a truly significant legacy, one that we are all fortunate to share as we strive to protect and enhance the artistic health and security of our precious orchestras.

Howard, we will miss your contribution mightily, but we wish you the very best in life after domestic airport terminals and meeting rooms! All of us at the SSO salute you and thank you.

### **Kees Boersma**

Principal Bass  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

---

How does someone start to say thanks to Howard for all the years of superlative help, guidance and mentoring he has given Orchestra Victoria.

I am not sure which year OV first began needing him, but I remember having the



*Incoming SOMA National Officer Bow Campbell and Geoff O'Reilly Horn SSO*

vote for moving the orchestra over to MEAA in the concert hall bandroom, and I know he was present then, but I know some of us had met him before that.

The change of membership was so critical at that time, as the orchestra was being moved around a bit with ownership. We were with the Victorian Arts Centre at the time, and we were also changing General Managers a lot it seemed. There were some issues with the previous union that was making it difficult in my own role as the union steward for the orchestra, and it was certainly felt that SOV (OV previously as State Orchestra of Victoria) was being left behind the other orchestras in conditions and pay, following them joining MEAA.

The two major events that come to mind where Howard has gone past the call of duty for OV is that change of union, and also the change over to the Australian Ballet company more recently. He was instrumental and totally essential to both events, and to the future success of the orchestra.

There were numerous other titanic events of course, particularly with reviews and negotiations, for which he has been the backbone and mover, in the need to get things done for

the orchestra. Invariably most of them would have meant the diminishing of the orchestra or death of it, if Howard had not guided the orchestra representatives and the management through those times.

We can never thank him enough for his guiding hand over orchestra representatives and all the orchestra, due to the nature, strength and professionalism of the way he does it. And the way he has carefully mentored us in the ways of dealing in negotiations and generally helping with the conditions of the musicians of OV.

On a personal level, my colleagues might say that I have natural patience in dealing with people, but I would say that I learned most of my people skills by watching Howard, listening to him and being advised by him. Probably other colleagues would say the same.

More importantly, personally I would be pretty confident in saying that if it wasn't for the efforts of one Howard Manley over the past 15 to 20 years, Orchestra Victoria may not exist today.

I have been very fortunate to be able to work with Howard for many years in countless meetings, in Melbourne and other cities

around Australia, and the thing that always comes to mind is his ability to sit back and let others have their say, but to jump in when something goes dangerously off track. I have seen him do this several times with skilled patience but with strength. Just as well he was there, I say.

It seems pretty clear to me that all the Australian orchestras owe Howard a great deal of appreciation for the overtime work he has put in to make sure they have a secure future, and that the musicians are treated well and paid well.

We will be losing a great asset with Howard deciding to step away from his role with the union, but he deserves to have a break from his many, many years of hard work for us.

So from me, thank you Howard.

### **Tony Gilham**

Associate Principal Trombone  
Orchestra Victoria

---

If your image of a union official is that perpetuated by popular myth, it is very likely that Howard Manley would not spring to mind as a typical example. In the more than a decade that I have known Howard the person that I quickly came to respect enormously demonstrated a level of knowledge, patience and trustworthiness that have ensured the continued progress of our industry in a time when it could have gone very awry. I think the characteristic that I valued most highly was his constant reasonableness and an ability to see what was in the best interests of all parties involved in a negotiation. He could of course, play a very firm hand when necessary and I know for a fact that managements were often nervous to see Howard on the other side of the negotiating table. His encyclo-

paedic knowledge of all aspects of orchestral working conditions meant that he was invariably better prepared than anyone else. He has been an exceptional driving force behind the progress of the orchestral network, and I can only thank him for all his countless hours of effort and slog on our behalf.

### **Doug Mackie**

Principal Flute  
Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

---

It is hard to imagine SOMA without Howard. The musicians of the SSO have negotiated many Enterprise Agreements with three different Managing Directors with Howard's guidance and I have had the privilege to work alongside him in several of those.

Howard has made an enormous contribution for the betterment of musicians' conditions in all the State orchestras and the impact of his work, particularly after the Strong Report and the full ABC divestment, is one we will always be indebted to well into our retirement.

His expertise and demeanour have been such an asset for our Committees when dealing with industrial issues during EA negotiations.

Always available, always with good advice but also always listening and trusting and following the guidance of the musicians.

We are going to miss him greatly and will be wishing him and his family all the best, hoping that from time to time he will come and visit to say hello and attend some performances to witness the legacy he has left.

### **Sandro Costantino**

Viola  
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

---



Howard has been with SOMA for so long that almost no-one can remember SOMA before he was “the man”. It says a lot that the overwhelming reaction to his departure after 20 years was one of disbelief and bewilderment – it will require some mental gymnastics to come to terms with a new chapter in the SOMA story that doesn’t have Howard as the central character.

In recent years in WASO we have been spared most of the extreme industrial battles that some of our colleagues have endured, but many of us who have worked closely with Howard both here and in SOMA Executive meetings share a deep appreciation of his integrity, honesty and (usually) polite way of getting his point across.

Howard is a very effective and tenacious negotiator, whether he’s representing one player or a complete orchestra. However, most people would be unaware of the tremendous work that Howard has done behind the scenes to advocate for orchestral music in Australia. His professional approach has opened doors at all levels of politics, and he has had good access to staffers and politicians on both sides of Federal and State governments and to the various arts bureaucracies.

Howard will be missed by many people, but not everyone. Those that have had the most contact with Howard will probably miss him the most: SOMA Executive members past and present, various EB committees around the country, many musicians who have spent time with him, and some of the better managements too. The good Orchestra Managers, HR Managers and CEOs will miss him, and for the others that won’t – I reckon Howard wouldn’t have it any other way.

Mate, I’m very happy that you’re going to be free to travel more and “enjoy life while

you still can” as you say. We’ll miss your sage advice and thank you deeply for all of the assistance you have given WASO over the years.

Cheers, Cam

### **Cameron Brook**

Principal Tuba

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

---

#### Job Description:

- thorough knowledge and understanding of the orchestral industry and its history
- thorough knowledge of, and working relationship with musicians and managements
- thorough understanding of workplace principles and processes
- thorough knowledge and understanding of government processes
- comprehensive understanding of company statements and financial matters
- able to present an articulate, coherent, concise and persuasive view on everything
- excellent strategic thinker with unparalleled clarity and vision
- always maintain a manner which is fair and reasonable

Is it possible to find someone who can meet all these criteria???????

Howard, you have delivered on all of this and more, and been an inspiration to us. We have learned a lot. Your commitment, patience, tolerance and vision has been essential to the survival of Australian orchestras. Thank you.

### **Dennis Vaughan**

Associate Principal Bass

Orchestra Victoria

# IN CONVERSATION

## HOWARD MANLEY AND SIMON COLLINS

Prior to retirement, Howard chats with Simon about his experiences as National SOMA Officer for eight of Australia's professional symphony orchestras.

**S:** *The first time I met you Howard was, I think, in 1991 during the process of the amalgamation vote amongst four unions including the Musicians' Union. And I came into the office to do some phoning around of musician union members to encourage them to vote yes, which they didn't do. I think you were the branch secretary of Actors' Equity at the time? So when did you start working with Equity?*

**H:** I started as a theatre organiser with Equity in late 1987 and prior to that I had worked for what is now the Communications Union working for what were then Telecom telephonists for about five years. I worked for Actors' Equity as a theatre organiser, organiser for the ballet dancers at the time, and obviously actors, singers, working in theatre. Then I was the Victorian secretary of Actors' Equity leading into the amalgamation and had a fair bit to do with the MUA at the time, because of the overlapping membership between the two organisations. And then with the amalgamation which as you say, was when members of the Musicians Union chose not to be part of the MEAA. Following the amalgamation I was, at different times, the assistant secretary, then Victorian secretary of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance before I started working for SOMA in the late 90s, probably 1998.



Howard Manley

**S:** *That sounds about right. So what was your first impression suddenly working for orchestras? Did you know anything about symphony orchestras when you first started?*

**H:** I'd been to a number of concerts over the years but I can't say I knew much about orchestras.

**S:** *I remember in the early days after you took the job, sitting down and explaining to you the hierarchy, for instance of the personnel in the orchestra.*

**H:** Yes

**S:** *So you've gone from a starting point of knowing virtually nothing about orchestras to being one of the country's experts on the subject.*

**H:** Well, as I often say, over the years I've picked up a bit of knowledge about the political economy of orchestras. I still know nothing about music! In all these years

working for unions, whatever the type of work people do and whatever you do as a union member, the issues tend to be very common. The way in which people work is obviously different – the culture is often a bit different – but the key things are remarkably similar. The thing that strikes you most of all about orchestras is their representative structures, in the way committees work – the closeness of relationships within orchestras is always endlessly surprising.

**S:** *I remember when the concept of enterprise bargains first came in – I took the view that an orchestra was an enterprise bargain just by the way it did its work. So you joined or took over the reins of SOMA, shortly after we had come in to MEAA, and had we already completed the outcome of the Mansfield Report and separated the orchestras? Or was it in train when you started?*

**H:** It was well underway. A number of them had already left – MSO and SSO obviously. Adelaide and Queensland were being set



up or had just been set up as separate companies owned by the ABC.

**S:** *And one of the interesting things about that period was the empowerment of the musicians. Having spent the previous 12 to 15 years of my working life being an activist in an environment where managements often just chose not to talk to us, we were empowered by that process collectively, and it was the first time we were able to install proper consultative processes. What did you see were the big challenges once you came on board?*

**H:** I think the continuing challenge has been, and no doubt will always be, funding issues for the orchestras. So there's that dimension. And the other dimension, as you've indicated, is the importance of committees, and the support of those committees within the orchestras. And ensuring that we become very, very good at succession planning within the orchestras, in terms of the committees. Ensuring we make greater effort to train people to be able to actively be members of the committees, and ensure that over time there's a reasonable turnover of representatives through the committees. Because so much depends on the nature of that interaction between the committee and the orchestra management. Not only on a day to day basis, but the level of involvement that the players effectively have in the running of the orchestra. And it really depends in large part on how effective those committees are. It depends in part upon the personality of the elected reps, but mostly it depends on how effective those committees are as a group. So that's one of the big continuing challenges. And clearly it's within the musicians' control as to how effective they are.

**S:** *The most significant event shortly after all the orchestras had been successfully corporatised was in fact the first review done by Helen Nugent in 1999, which established*

*what turned out to be some very robust formulae for funding all of the major companies. Let's talk about Nugent and the effect that had on all the major companies, but particularly the orchestras.*

**H:** Richard Alston was the minister at the time and there had been a long history of arts companies getting into financial trouble, having to be bailed out by additional government funding. Minister Richard Alston commissioned Helen Nugent and others to do an enquiry into what was required to ensure that they were artistically and financially viable. SOMA made a submission. The key recommendations included a recommendation for a funding model which was subsequently adopted by the government. But you might recall there were also recommendations to amalgamate Orchestra Victoria and MSO. And similarly with what were then the two Queensland orchestras, QPO And QSO. We campaigned against the amalgamation in Victoria. It was a very effective campaign, and after meeting with the minister and a fair bit of media, the government acknowledged that a merger wouldn't be a good idea. But one of the consequences of running that campaign was that Richard Alston allocated additional money to the MSO to increase their wages. As a Melbourne boy, he wanted to make sure that the orchestra in his town was competitive with the SSO. So one of the outcomes of that Victorian campaign, incongruously, was we stopped the merger, saved OV and the MSO got a significant wage increase.

The Queensland merger went ahead, which set up for Queensland musicians a series of issues, and unquestionably a series of problems over the next decade. But at the time of the merger, it was at least in principal, supported by the musicians of the two orchestras in Queensland. The other thing that came out of the review was a funding model which was adopted by state

and federal governments. Essentially it set down a level of funding for each of the arts companies, including the orchestras, with a level of indexation and a commitment to review the funding every three years to ensure the funding was adequate, and the companies were delivering what they were required to deliver in terms of artistic outcomes and access for the general community. And that was a proposition SOMA supported.

**S:** *We measure our history in SOMA by reviews. The next review didn't occur until 2005 conducted by James Strong, which was specifically into the orchestras. That had a number of unfortunate consequences for the ABC orchestras. What are the main features of the outcomes from that review?*

**H:** The key thing was moving the orchestras out of ABC ownership, and that had been a longstanding agenda by governments for a very long time – probably for a couple of decades – to progressively move them from control by ABC ownership to being fully independent companies. The recommendations that came down with Strong were essentially that the musicians in the new non-ABC companies would retain virtually all their employment arrangements; most importantly, Commonwealth superannuation and Commonwealth workers' compensation. However when those recommendations went to the Government for consideration in the following budget, the Department of Finance essentially ruled them out. When the Government's response came out with the budget which provided additional money to the companies, as had been recommended, the Government at that point said, despite the recommendations, that the musicians could no longer be part of Commonwealth super. That was, for us, a nasty surprise. We lobbied heavily, and the consequence of that lobbying – which the companies also supported, as they knew it was simply not

viable otherwise – the consequence was that there was compensation paid to the musicians to ensure that the outcome of the new superannuation arrangements would be no worse for musicians than what it would have been had they stayed in Commonwealth super. Unfortunately we were forced out of Commonwealth workers' comp system to the state system. We weren't able to change that but for the most part the conditions that musicians had had when employed by ABC-owned companies continued on.

**S:** *One of the other outcomes of the Strong Review was the biggest fight that SOMA had since its formation and that was with respect to the recommendation to reduce the size of three of the orchestras – the Queensland, the Tasmanian and the Adelaide orchestras. Strong was very much inhibited in his recommendations by the requirement that he didn't have access to extra funding and so his solution was, in order to save money, to savage the size of those orchestras. Would you like to relate some of what happened in the backroom negotiating to get around that and how SOMA conducted that campaign?*

**H:** It was one of the more remarkable scenarios. During the course of the review, we had spent a fair bit of time lobbying MPs about what the possible outcomes might be of the enquiry. And we were concerned that because the enquiry was being conducted essentially out of Sydney that there might be less attention paid to the orchestras outside Melbourne and Sydney. So we spent a lot of time talking to Queensland Coalition backbenchers, similarly in Western Australia and South Australia and Tasmania, to try and take out some insurance if the recommendations were going to adversely impact on the non-Melbourne Sydney orchestras. We'd taken a fair bit of insurance. When the Review was released and it was leaked, the recommendations were to downsize the orchestras

I think the continuing challenge has been, and no doubt will always be, funding issues for the orchestras.

in Tasmania, Adelaide and in Queensland by about a third. So we ensured there was a fair bit of publicity about that. We also ensured that the backbench MPs from those states were well briefed about the recommendations and the implications of the recommendations. And then one of the more remarkable things happened.

Parliament was sitting at the time when the Report came down and, led by George Brandis and Alexander Downer, there was a revolt in the Coalition during the regular party room meeting rejecting the downsizing. Minister Rod Kemp, given the rebellion in the party room, – declared within the morning – that these recommendations to downsize the three orchestras would not be accepted by the Government. All this happened within 48 hours of a recommendation coming down. It was one of the most remarkable turnarounds which certainly I have seen. In large part it was because we'd made a significant effort to brief the MPs from those states prior to the report coming down and there was significant support from MPs to ensure that the orchestra in their state was not going to be disadvantaged.

**S:** *Meanwhile as Strong was only preoccupied with the symphony orchestras, the other two orchestras – members of SOMA, AOBO and Orchestra Victoria – were starting to have problems of their own. The next review would have been the review that was done into the opera and pit services.*

**H:** There was a review immediately after Strong to look at OV and AOBO, and essentially the opera company (OA) in particular managed to negotiate some additional cash for AOBO out of that. And there was a marginal amount, but not much, for Orchestra Victoria coming out of that review. There was also supposed to be a triennial review of all the major companies two or three years after that. By which time the government had changed. So by the time the triennial review was programmed, Peter Garrett was the minister, and the Labour Government didn't proceed with the triennial review, and the existing arrangements, aside from some sub CPI indexation, were essentially frozen. Which for orchestras – given the labour-intensity of these organisations and that their costs rise at a rate greater than inflation – means that if the funding is adjusted by something less than inflation, it's only a matter of time before they get to crisis.

**S:** *It was from this period that the crisis really started to cut in, and Orchestra Victoria was under particular pressure almost immediately, and some of the state symphony orchestras were starting to feel the pinch, particularly up in Queensland. What happened next? Because the Labour Government didn't review the funding at all.*

**H:** No. During this period, Orchestra Victoria had been under significant financial pressure and the Australia Council were very concerned about the future of Orchestra Victoria and at different times they commissioned consultants to come and review AOBO and Orchestra Victoria. One consultant commissioned by the Australia Council recommended that both orchestras should become casualised contract orchestras. We made it very plain that we would not accept those arrangements and we ran a bit of a media campaign around the slogan of Workchoices for Orchestras. We managed to chop the legs off that proposal



by the consultants. Then there was a further enquiry the Australia Council set up which eventually led to the ownership of Orchestra Victoria being taken by The Australian Ballet. As part of that process there was additional funding for Orchestra Victoria as they moved to ballet ownership. But by and large for the other orchestras there have not been the adjustment in funding that is required, and so they all continue to move towards that scenario of increasing crisis.

**S:** *This is the case to some degree of all the major companies under the AMPAG arrangements and it would be fair to say that if we had adhered to the fundamental concepts that Nugent put down back in 2000 we might be in a very different place.*

**H:** Absolutely.

**S:** *Keeping a proper formula in place which had good justifications was the recommendation and this should have been regularly reviewed. So all of the major companies, it could be argued, are somewhere approaching a financial crisis or they are continuing to approach that. Are there any other issues for symphony orchestras now which you think need to be considered a priority other than funding? Things like working conditions and the way our agreements are structured?*

**H:** I think the major thing for the orchestras – the challenge for them always – is finding that balance between the artistic imperatives and the access imperatives. Of ensuring that the programs they present are artistically diverse, challenging for the orchestra musicians and the audiences, but also at the same time catering for a broad general public. But also in terms of the access objectives of providing the opportunity for audiences not only outside the major centres, but also within the major cities in terms of diverse socio-economic groups. Education is clearly a part of that.

I think the major thing for the orchestras – the challenge for them always – is finding that balance between the artistic imperatives and the access imperatives.

So that's a continual balancing act for the organisations and always will be. And whenever funding is tight it means that that challenge becomes increasingly difficult.

In terms of the musicians' working arrangements, it fundamentally gets back to – as we were talking about before – the success of the committees. Because within reason, within the resource envelope, the committees, if effective, can have a significant influence on how the orchestra operates in terms of how work is organised and allocated, and also entitlements. So in large part, within that resource envelope, it gets down to how well organised the musicians are themselves in each orchestra.

**S:** *One of the things that Helen Nugent raises in her very recent opera review, with regard to Opera Australia, is the significant amount of musicals of a commercial nature it is doing. I think probably the equivalent for orchestras is the ever-increasing number of film scores for instance that are played live underneath a screen, or backing of popular music as a backing band. There's been a very big increase in this over the last few years. Would you say that this is largely a direct result of the funding problems we've been talking about?*

**H:** Unquestionably there is an increasing pressure on the companies to do more and more of this commercial work. I think most musicians appreciate that a level of commercial work is not only required but

is desirable for those sort of broad audience access reasons. But it is getting to the point, if not at the point, where the motivation for doing it becomes increasingly simply for financial reasons. Which raises, you know, significant issues about the artistic standing of the organisation. And this is something that the musicians need to be in continuing dialogue with their management – about the type of commercial work and the amount of commercial work which the organisation undertakes.

**S:** *And in my 35 years as a member of the Melbourne Symphony, the nature of the job changed enormously. When I started the orchestra only played concerts, so the nature of the work was either rehearsing for the next concert or making a recording or performing a concert. By the time I retired there was a great deal more involved, including all sorts of education projects, community outreach projects, often using quite small numbers of musicians and ensembles of players. We've also seen a lot of division of the orchestras into multiple groups, performing in different places at the same time. This has put quite a big burden on the model of employment that we set out with, which was covered pretty much with a standard award arrangement. The enterprise agreements really just moved a little bit further on from the old award arrangements. Do you see any big challenges and any potential solutions for how we manage this changed work environment?*

**H:** I think it's constantly evolving, as you indicate. There has been a significant change and it will continue to change. I think the key to it and the current arrangements should ensure that for the most part these different activities – sometimes additional activities – are voluntary. Because it's important that the organisation who wants to undertake more diverse activities takes the musicians with them, as part of a culture. There is little point saying to people you must participate in these

other activities. It's best to make it voluntary and over time change and adapt the culture so that it becomes a normal part of work. And it means the musicians have the opportunity to lead some of this additional activity, which is often the case. We've seen with all of the orchestras, often it's groups of musicians who want to undertake different performance activities, and the companies should be supporting that. So I think that's got to be the approach – that it's evolving, it's voluntary and it's led increasingly by the musicians.

**S:** *So if we look at the orchestras in the state they were when you took over SOMA and where they are now, would you say they're in a good place? It's a start that we've still got all of them!*

**H:** That's right, that's a very good scenario. Many people have argued for decades of course, that orchestras have no future, but clearly they do have what I would think is a very bright future. But for those of us who are involved in the orchestral world, it is a constant and continuing challenge. And Simon, as you and I have been involved in the politics of maintaining orchestras, maintaining sizes of orchestras – as we know well – this is a process that will continue well after we've moved on to other things. So people in ten years, twenty years and beyond no doubt will be fighting exactly the same battles with many of the same arguments as has been the case for the last fifty years – probably the last hundred years. So I don't think that will change. It's an important battle which must be constantly fought.

**S:** *So where to from here? What's going to happen for Howard?*

**H:** Travelling. Pursuing a different life of contemplation and travel. I look forward to it.



Lyndsay Mountfort

Viola

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

# CULTURE SWAP



“Haere mai, nau mai, e ngā iwi e...”

The karanga (welcome call) floats down the driveway, and the kuia (female elder) waves us forward, toward the school hall.

23 musicians, plus operations staff and road crew have travelled two hours this morning by winding road from Gisborne, New Zealand’s

most remote small city, at the end of a three day mini-tour of free family and school concerts. We’re visiting a Māori language immersion school, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori O Te Waiū O Ngāti Porou, in Ruatoria, a town of 750 people near the East Cape of New Zealand’s North Island, and about 650 kilometres from our home base in Wellington.

Our party of twenty-three musicians, crew and staff walk slowly up the driveway, led by concertmaster, conductor Hamish McKeich, and other senior players and staff as the





karanga continues, and file into the hall toward waiting seats, in front of all the kids and staff, as well as local elders and notables. Once we are all present, the whole school launches into a rousing haka. The energy and pride of these kids is overwhelming.

A kaumātua (elder) launches into a speech of welcome in Te Reo (Māori language), paying his respects to Ngāti Porou's (the local iwi or tribe) ancestors, their mountain and their river, and then the whole school performs their waiata (song), with actions.

Then it's our turn to respond. Artistic and Education Coordinator, Tjasa Dykes, rises to the occasion. She has prepared (with expert help) a short greeting also in Māori, naming her own mountain and river, in her native Slovenia, and her role with the NZSO. She thanks the community for welcoming us onto their land, explains what the NZSO is about, and that we visit in the spirit of Ako – learning and sharing. From the nods and smiles from the elders sitting opposite it is clear that her material is appropriate and her pronunciation at least comprehensible.



*L: The students examine Marnie Sebire's french horn R: The students show us their work: a traditional maori kite*

Now it's time for our for us to sing. Flutist Kirsten Eade plays the introduction to Pōkarekare Ana. The well-known song originates from Ngāti Porou but was adopted and adapted in the early tourism days by Rotorua tribe, Te Arawa, and from there it eventually became standard material in every primary school nationwide. As we start to sing, we see the older kids smirk at each other, wondering if we're about to commit the faux pas of singing the wrong version. They smile broadly when we avoid the trap. Finally Tjasa approaches the group of elders, and places an envelope with our koha (gift) on the floor in front of them. This is picked up by the hosts, and we're invited forward in a greeting line, to hongi (press noses) and shake hands with our hosts.

The formalities complete, we're informed that we're no longer strangers, and are free to consider ourselves at home, to proceed with our rehearsal and then to enjoy the food

prepared for us in the classroom which is our green room for the day.

We find our instruments and have a quick sound-check and rehearsal, and emerge to enjoy the hospitality of the school community. While waiting for lunch, we're approached by a steady stream of students, keen to introduce themselves and chat about our instruments and our jobs, and to tell us about themselves. One group brings out a traditional kite to show us. Trays of food start to appear, carried by students, parents and other members of the school community.

After lunch we're back in the hall for two performances of *Peter and the Wolf*. The first is to students and teachers from all around the district. Some have travelled for 90 minutes or more. We've travelled a long way ourselves, so collectively it's a significant effort to bring us all together. The second performance is to the entire host school,



*The students perform their waiata (action song)*



along with parents and other community members including a few patients from the local hospital.

Narrator for the tour, kids TV presenter Chris Lam Sam, is a New Zealander of Pasifika origin. He introduces the characters of the story in the usual way, with the instrumental excerpts that represent them. But for this occasion, he uses Māori names for the instruments, and has flash cards to represent each – maybe as much as a memory aid for himself as for the kids benefit. Chris manages to substitute the Māori names into the entire script, to the kids evident pleasure.

During his introduction for each performance, Chris asks each group to raise their hands if they've previously experienced a live orchestra. No-one has.

After the second performance, we're thanked by school Principal Phillip Heeney. He informs us that when he took the call from the NZSO proposing a visit, he genuinely thought someone was pulling his leg. He reminds

us that most if not all of our audience have never experienced a live orchestra before, and suggests that most of them may never have the opportunity to do so again – unless we make a return visit. Then we're treated to another haka from the senior kids.

On arrival in Ruatoria that morning, we stopped briefly outside the Radio Ngāti Porou building. The manager came out to introduce himself, and informed us that he was heading up to the school himself, to set up a live-stream of the event. The video remains available from the station's Facebook page. The comments below tell us that the stream was watched by Ngāti Porou living all over New Zealand and Australia.

Then it's back to the bus for the journey back to Gisborne. The only gate big enough for the coach and the orchestra truck is at the back of the school. As we trundle slowly toward it, half a dozen small boys catch up yelling and waving, and as the driver negotiates the tight turn through the gate, they form up and launch into a last impromptu and noisy haka.



*Narrator Chris Lam Sam introducing the characters of 'Peter and the Wolf'*

FEATURE THE RING CYCLE



Damien Eckersley

Principal Bass  
Orchestra Victoria

# BLOGGING THE RING CYCLE







## MONDAY OCTOBER 3RD

There is an extra sense of anticipation as I arrive at the Orchestra Victoria studio in Albert Park this morning. It's shortly before 9 and in just over an hour, 130 plus musicians, a cast of vocal stars, stage technicians, volunteers, makeup artists, set and costume designers will all set off on a journey through more than 16 hours of some of the most remarkable and revered art ever to be created.

Coming from a symphony orchestra background, it is hard to imagine spending almost three months on a single project but having spent more than a few hours in the woodshed coming to terms with the sheer volume of notes, I'm sure that we all have our work cut out.

*Photo: Jeff Busby*

This morning marks the first orchestral rehearsal of *Das Rheingold*, the first of four music dramas that make up Richard Wagner's epic, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

There is somewhat of a festival atmosphere at the studio as Orchestra Victoria are welcoming guests from as far away as Finland and Norway, as well as a raft of players from around Australia and local Melbourne musicians. It's a strange combination of nerves and sweet relief as I meet my desk partner for the project, Professor Matthias Weber, a long serving Principal Double Bass with the Munich Philharmonic, now retired and teaching at the Musik Hochschule in Stuttgart, and perhaps most importantly, a member of the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra on 23 occasions and a veteran of no less than 27 "Rings".

It's the first time that I have experienced such massive forces in the Albert Park studio, and the last project that will be rehearsed there before the relocation of the orchestra next year to other premises. From the opening bars of glorious Eb major drawn with calm authority from the Melbourne Ring Orchestra by our leader and guide through this journey, Pietari Inkinen, it is obvious that we have all embarked on a long, challenging but rewarding and life changing experience.

### DIE WALKÜRE SITZPROBE

The orchestral voice in *The Ring* is deep, complex and highly involved and yet, as with all opera, it is incomplete without the other characters and voices that complete this epic drama. It's for this reason that the first Sitzprobe always has an extra element of excitement. With the promise of a stellar Australian and international cast, coupled with some of the most powerful, dramatic and moving vocal music ever written, this was definitely no exception.



Instantly things fall into place. With new points of impulse and inspiration coming from the cast, previously challenging or curious moments become clear, and from the bass section, sitting at the back of the orchestra directly in front of the singers, the power and quality of their voices and artistry is almost overwhelming. There is a clear sense of excitement and mutual admiration as the cast, having worked tirelessly rehearsing with piano are finally paired with the power and colours of Wagner's full orchestral vision. It's hard to pick a highlight, but American sopranos Amber Wagner as Sieglinde and Lise Lindstrom as Brünnhilde are incredible. Just over two weeks in and the orchestra is becoming more and more fluent in the complex and unique musical language of Wagner's amazing score.

### GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG SITZPROBE

27TH OCTOBER, IVANHOE CENTRE

Trekking out to the fabulous Art Deco Ivanhoe centre on the morning of my birthday for the final Sitzprobe of the rehearsal period may have seemed like a task at the time, but to reach the end of the journey in such a spectacular fashion made it all worthwhile. Again, the incredible artistry of Lise Lindstrom and Stefan Vinke as Siegfried were on full display with the Rhinemaidens and men of the Opera Australia chorus adding an extra dimension to an already complex palette. The excitement knowing that from this point forward we would be in the theatre with little room for corrections was obvious, however in the words of the maestro, "we are in good shape".

The ensemble has developed into a living breathing organism, able to react and respond to impulse from the stage or organically to the ever calm yet commanding hand of Pietari, and with a sound knowledge that has come as a result of dedication during the rehearsal period. Next stop, the State Theatre!

## GENERAL REHEARSALS

The extended orchestra pit in the State Theatre of the Victorian Arts Centre is to be our home for the next two months, and we are for the first time welcoming paying audience members to witness the results of already more a month's hard work. Having previously only played in the small version of the orchestra pit (far too small to accommodate the orchestra, let alone cope with the dynamic range), the sound both from within the pit, and being thrown into the theatre is incredible! The presence of the orchestra is undeniably enhanced and those who are able to experience this sound would argue that the larger pit should be used for most of the opera and ballet repertoire performed by Orchestra Victoria in this theatre.

Those from the orchestra fortunate enough to witness a performance in which they are not involved are buoyed by the impact of the orchestral sound blending with the drama onstage and the spectacular and thought provoking direction of Neil Armfield.

## OPENING NIGHT OF *DIE WALKÜRE*

As a bass player, there are few opening bars as exciting to play as the beginning of *Die Walküre*. It is as much about the drama of the orchestral sound in that moment as it is about the anticipation of the expanse of music yet to come. Even though *Götterdämmerung* is longer, the relentless nature of the music in *Walküre* always makes it feel more physically and mentally taxing.

The public general rehearsals are done and we are into the first of three complete cycles. There is a real festival atmosphere around the Arts Centre and within the orchestra as new friends are made and there is genuine excitement around the standard of the performance. Even a delay of over an hour between the first and second acts due to a set malfunction couldn't dampen the spirits of the cast, orchestra or audience who, despite being in their seats until after midnight, gave a long and enthusiastic ovation.

## GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

The end of the first cycle.

As the Melbourne Ring Orchestra stood on stage in front of a packed State Theatre receiving what could only be described as a rapturous ovation, it hit home that in a few weeks' time I would be in a similar position, only it would be over, and it was not a feeling that I was looking forward to.

Already my brain (or what was left of it after five and a half hours of Q flat major) was ticking over looking for the next opportunity to play it all again. Before the beginning of the rehearsal period I was not like this. I knew that it was incredible music. I knew that it was a huge undertaking for any organisation: artistically, financially and in terms of human resources and personnel. What I didn't expect was that it would be a life changing experience. The incredible talents and efforts of everyone involved have contributed to an event equally appreciated and enjoyed by the artists, public and critics. It has been even to this point, an emotional, physical and mental marathon. However if I could run it again tomorrow (or hopefully in three years time!!) I would.





**Julia Brooke**

Horn  
West Australian Symphony Orchestra

## WASO ABU DHABI/CHINA

# TOUR DIARY

### DAY ONE – ABU DHABI

WASO has embarked on its first international tour in ten years! After a long flight from Perth, the orchestra is settling into the lovely Park Rotana Hotel in Abu Dhabi. We have a free day before rehearsals start, so it's a great excuse to explore this fascinating city. This includes visiting the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the central souk for spices and trinkets, Ferrari World and some of many shopping malls that are on offer. The day was rounded off by many with a cocktail at the hotel's swim up bar.

### DAY TWO

Today was the first day of rehearsals in Abu Dhabi, and the first rehearsal with our stand-in conductor Sir Richard Armstrong (Asher couldn't get a visa). Our venue for our rehearsals and concert is the concert hall within the Emirates Palace Hotel; a seven

*Christine Reitzenstein, Libby Browning, Julia Brooke, Amanda Dean and Mary-Anne Blades visiting the Grand Mosque*









Photo: Graeme Norris.

*Associate Principal Cellist Louise McKay heading through the grand foyer of the Emirates Palace Hotel to the auditorium.*



*Dave Evans, Julia Brooke and Pete Miller don on traditional kanduras and abayas to visit the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque*



Photo: Alex Miller

*The WASO bassoons show us how to attain those low notes in the Shanghai Symphony Hall.*

star palatial building on the beach, with the most beautiful grounds and almost entirely gold interiors! In the afternoon, the orchestra is joined by Kiwi tenor Simon O'Neill to rehearse some arias from *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal*, amongst others, to fit in with our fantastic all-Wagner program.

### DAY THREE

Today is concert day and our last day in Abu Dhabi. The concert, part of the Abu Dhabi Classics Series, is a huge success, with a very receptive audience who give us many standing ovations. The orchestra plays this demanding program beautifully, and the audience particularly enjoys Simon's wonderful arias. The Sheikh is in attendance, along with many other government officials and expats. The evening is finished off with a reception in one of the hotel gardens, overlooking the water.



Photo: Marina Woodhouse

*Ending a free day in Abu Dhabi around the swim-up bar at our fantastic hotel, cheers!*

#### DAY FOUR – ABU DHABI/DUBAI/BEIJING

Today the orchestra is split into three for our travel to China. The first group departs at 6:30am to drive to Dubai airport for our flight to Beijing. The other two groups have a slower morning, and don't leave until the afternoon, giving them the opportunity for one last shopping trip or cardamom-spiced coffee.

#### DAY FIVE – BEIJING

While two thirds of the orchestra is in the air on their way to Beijing, the first group has arrived, rested, and is out exploring. Some partake in an organised tour to The Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, while others haggle at the Silk Markets and venture in search of Peking duck and other delicacies.

#### DAY SIX

Rest/sightseeing day for the remainder of the orchestra. The EChO (Education Chamber Orchestra) and the Brass Quintet head to the adventurously named No. 1 Elementary School and No. 8 Middle School to perform schools concerts for the younger children, and a masterclass with some of the advanced brass students. The reception is really wonderful, and we hope that cellist Xiaole Wu and presenter Lee Stanley consider taking their translating-comedy routine on the road.

#### DAY SEVEN

Our first concert day in China, and our first day back with Maestro Asher Fisch and soloist Jean-Yves Thibaudet. The Beijing concert takes place at the Forbidden City Concert Hall, as part of the Beijing Music Festival, and is broadcast live on Chinese television. The concert is sold out, and the









Photo: Alex Miller

*Violinists Cerys Tooby and Rebecca Glorie, and Joshua Davis (trombone) and Frankie Lo Surdo (horn) enjoying a day trip excursion to the Great Wall of China.*

## DAY NINE

The orchestra has a free morning, before our soundcheck and concert tonight. Our amazing venue is the Shanghai Symphony Hall, and everyone is completely blown away by the facilities and the acoustics of the hall, which was modelled after the Philharmonie in Berlin. The concert is completely sold out and is the best of the tour, if not one of the best performances of the year! Post concert, the orchestra, management and Asher gather for a well-deserved drink at the Shanghai Brewery nearby.



Photo: Brian Maloney

*The percussion section are all smiles after our Beijing concert at the Forbidden City Concert Hall.*



Mark Bruwel  
President SOMA

# ICSOM CONFERENCE 2016

## August 24 – 27 Washington DC

ICSOM is the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians. It is made up of American orchestras who have an annual budget of \$6 million or more. It currently has 53 member orchestras. In August I represented SOMA at their annual conference – a very worthwhile experience.

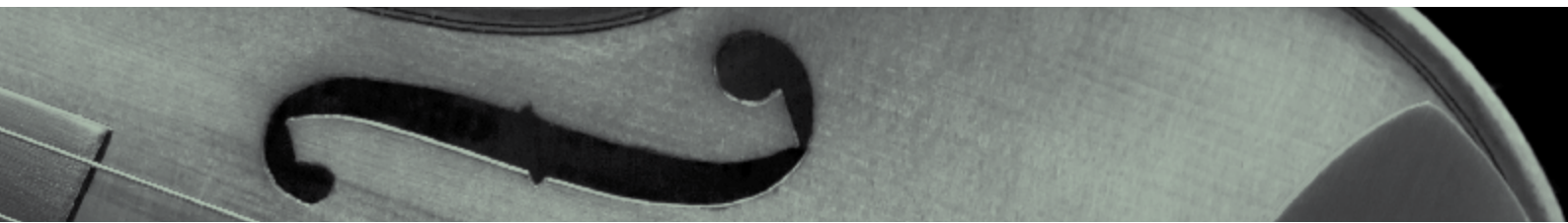
SOMA and ICSOM are not dissimilar in that they both are representative organisations within a larger union. In our case it is MEAA, for ICSOM it is the American Federation of Musicians (AFM).

Whilst they have 'International' in their title, it is essentially set up for American orchestras. However, under their Chair Bruce Ridge, they have been building relationships outside of America. At this conference Robert Fraser from the Organisation of Canadian Musicians (OCSM), Nigel Charman from the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Benoit Machuel from the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) and Dr Heather Kurzbauer from the Netherlands also attended and gave presentations.

We have featured Bruce Ridge (a Double Bassist) previously in *Senza Sord*. He is highly regarded, an eloquent speaker and as Chair, helped steer many orchestras through some very difficult times over the last 10 years. His approach was to go 'big picture' by constantly arguing the benefits of music and orchestras to society in general. 10 years is a long haul and during this Conference he decided to retire as Chair. Meredith Snow (Violin) from the Los Angeles Philharmonic was elected the new Chair.

I would cautiously say that things are generally on the improve in America for orchestras – Detroit, Nashville, St Louis, Atlanta and Grand Rapids have all recorded increases in ticket sales and philanthropy. However, I would immediately qualify that by saying many are playing either down on numbers, with reduced pay, shorter seasons, or a combination of those. Also, at the time of the Conference, Fort Worth, Baton Rouge and New York City Opera Orchestra were far from being in the clear. It was very good news to hear recently that the New York City Opera Orchestra have finally negotiated a new agreement.

A number of challenges were identified during the Conference and these include:



1) Ticket sales are down

Amongst the opera orchestras apparently only a maximum 30% of income is from ticket sales (and can be as low as 18%) This has led to the question, are orchestras an arts organization or a fund raising organisation?

2) Dwindling donors

Not as big an issue for us but American orchestras are increasingly finding themselves depending on a smaller and smaller group of donors. Compounding this is these donors' children don't always share the same ideals as their parents and currently only one orchestra board has the next generation as a director.

3) Audiences are predominantly Caucasian

4) Audiences increasingly wanting an experience rather than just a concert

5) Management speak to watch out for:

'Structural deficit'

'Making things sustainable'

'The audiences are getting older'

'Donor fatigue'

A need to 'destructure'

Solutions discussed included:

1) A focus on Customer Service – Looking at everything from the orchestra bows to personal contact. Audiences want to meet performers not Development Managers. They respond to hearing from a performer about a concert rather than an email advertisement.

2) An acknowledgment that an orchestral musician's job is no longer just 'Tutti Violin' or 'Associate Principal Clarinet'

3) Orchestras must engage with their communities. In particular with their education institutions and their social services organisations. Orchestra boards and/or politicians are much less likely to take the axe to an orchestra if they have strong community support.

4) What do professional sports teams do to build their supporter base?

As well as the international guests, there was an impressive list of guest speakers covering a wide range of topics:

- Dr Heather Malyuk – an audiologist from Chicago on Hearing Health. She has worked with the Chicago Symphony, Chicago Lyric and also Beyoncé, Stevie Wonder and Taylor Swift. The noise issues associated with orchestras increasingly working with pop and rock bands came up a number of times throughout the Conference.
- Deborah Rutter – President of the Kennedy Centre, talked on building and maintaining audiences.
- There was discussion on bullying in the workplace.
- Two sound engineers gave a presentation on working in an amplified environment.
- The Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss (AAMHL) talked on how to manage hearing loss including the psychological side and the pros and cons of hearing aids for musicians.

- The American Federation of Musicians Diversity Committee spoke. The issue of diverse representation on our committees is an important one to develop.
- ICSOM has an Emeritus Programme that we should explore for SOMA.
- There was a very interesting discussion on social media, particularly in regard to musicians recording themselves in rehearsals or concerts and posting it online. Be careful not to shoot your negotiations on Recording and Broadcasting in the foot!

- The Symphonic Services Division of the AFM highlighted the new wage chart web page [www.wagechart.afm.org](http://www.wagechart.afm.org) Well worth having a look at.

But perhaps the one event that left the deepest impression happened right before the Conference opened. In the spirit of unionism more broadly, ICSOM organized a community service event at the Central Union Mission. For a couple of hours in the afternoon we prepared and served meals to about 100 homeless people. A string and wind ensemble also performed. It was a very meaningful experience underlying Bruce Ridge's statement at the Conference that 'Music is a powerful medium for peace and inclusiveness'.

---

**Howard Manley**  
National SOMA Officer  
Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance

## FUNDING FOR AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRAS – AN OVERVIEW

Australian orchestras are jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government and each state government.

For the most part, the Commonwealth provides 80% of the agreed level of funding for each orchestra and the respective state government contributes the remaining 20%. In Queensland, for long lost historical reasons,

the proportion is 70% from the Commonwealth and the state obligation is 30%.

These long standing funding arrangements have been in place and agreed to by the governments since the Major Performing Arts Inquiry (MPAI) chaired by Helen Nugent in 1999, then adjusted following the Strong Inquiry of 2005, and are now reflected in the



## 2011 National Framework for Government Support of the Major Performing Arts.

The National Framework sets out the agreed level of funding for each orchestra, indeed as it does for each of the other major performing arts companies. The group of 28 Major Performing Arts Companies also includes Opera Australia, The Australian Ballet, the state opera companies and the larger theatre companies, amongst others.

Known as the Tripartite Agreements, each of the 28 companies enters into binding arrangements with the Commonwealth and the relevant state government, setting out the agreed level of funding for the company, together with the express requirements on the company to deliver programs and activities consistent with the broad government policy goals of artistic excellence and broad access.

The Tripartite Agreements are overseen by the Major Performing Arts Panel of the Australia Council on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, and in the states by the relevant arts agency. Adrian Collette is the current chair of the Major Performing Arts Panel.

The core funding for the major companies is delivered in rolling three year blocks (triennials), allowing companies to plan programs ahead and enter into forward artist contracts with confidence.

Often misunderstood by some, the Australia Council oversees two very different streams of government funding: the rolling triennial for the majors, which is agreed company by company by the governments, and the more well-known arms-length peer-assessed funding to individual artists and small compa-

nies. Both streams of funding have a long history in Australia. The Australia Council was originally established in the 1970s to provide funding at arms-length from government and the allocation of funds to applicants, determined by peer artists. This approach is well suited to time-limited funding to individuals and small companies.

Funding for orchestras historically was delivered through the ABC and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. It was only following the Major Performing Arts Inquiry of 1999 that the Australia Council was allocated the task on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, of overseeing the funding contracts for the orchestras. The amount of funding for each orchestra is still determined by agreement between the Commonwealth and the state governments. For 2015-2016 Commonwealth funding for symphony orchestras was \$56m and for opera \$24m.

### NEW ZEALAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For our colleagues at NZSO, public funding is provided by the central Government's Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage through the Vote Arts program. Funding was increased in the May Budget from 1 July 2016 to NZ\$14.6m. Local Government support comes by way of lease and auditorium hire support from Wellington City Council. As a Crown Entity the orchestra is required to provide extensive public reporting of all its activity.

# CONCERTMASTER EMERITUS

OUR MUCH-LOVED CONCERTMASTER DENE OLDING  
STEPS DOWN AND IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS  
CONCERTMASTER EMERITUS.

*This article originally appeared on the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's news site Backstage News+. It is reproduced with kind permission from Dene Olding and SSO.*

When I was growing up I always dreamed of being a Concertmaster in a major orchestra. My parents had sent me over to New York to study at the Juilliard School with the great pedagogue Ivan Galamian. I was eventually appointed as Concertmaster of the Juilliard Orchestra and from that point I felt certain that this would be my career path. By the time I was 25 I'd already spent 11 years in America and was eager to reconnect with Australia again; I wanted to experience living back here as an adult and to be closer to my family. In 1982, I was appointed as Leader and Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and to the Australia Ensemble and moved to Sydney.

A few years later and following success in the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International

Violin Competition, Trevor Green, then head of the ABC Music, encouraged me to put my name forward for the newly-created Co-Concertmaster position at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. I had appeared as soloist with the orchestra quite a few times already and at the age of 29 I probably became the youngest person ever to hold this position. It was my dream come true.

Back then the SSO was still part of the ABC. My appointment coincided with those of Stuart Challender as Chief Conductor and Mary Vallentine as General Manager. At that time, there was a palpable sense of change and excitement in the air. It was a perfect time to join the orchestra and the incumbent Concertmaster, Donald Hazelwood was a generous and supportive colleague to me. After eight years in the chair, I took a break from orchestral playing and was invited to rejoin the orchestra in 2002.

During my 23 years as Concertmaster I have watched the SSO improve steadily to become the world-class orchestra it is today.



Photo: Yoonbae Kim

Dene Olding

I've seen as many changes behind the scenes as I have on the stage. The professionalism of the management team is a case in point. It's no mean feat to organise a large orchestra and to sell tickets to fill the Concert Hall every week. These days it requires a whole office of specialists constantly adapting to the current musical climate to do just that. As a result, we seem to be in a much healthier position here in Sydney than in many orchestras around the world.

Choosing my favourite musical memory with the SSO is like trying to choose a favourite child! But I suppose I could be permitted a few fond recollections. In my first official engagement as Concertmaster, my mother, Pamela Page, was soloist in Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto with Stuart Challender conducting – an amazing coincidence! In fact all the musicians in my family have been soloists with the SSO. I performed Mozart's *Sinfonie Concertante* and Arthur Benjamin's *Romantic Fantasy* with my wife, Irina Morozova, and I should mention that my father, Max Olding, played Rachmaninoff's *Paganini Variations* with the SSO and Eugene

Goossens to win the 1952 ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition as it was called in those days.

I remember wonderful concerts with Charles Dutoit (*The Rite of Spring*, Mahler's Symphony No.8 and *Scheherazade*), Stuart Challender (*Petrushka* at Carnegie Hall), Simone Young (*Ein Heldenleben*, *Elektra*), Christoph von Dohnanyi (Bruckner's Symphony No.4 earlier this year), Robertson (*Flying Dutchman*) and Ashkenazy (complete Sibelius symphonies). I have played many times as soloist with the SSO – always a thrill – and have great memories of Ross Edwards' Maninyas with Ashkenazy at the Edinburgh Festival and also with Edo de Waart at his first concert as Music Director, Brahms concerto with Mackerras and plenty of others such as Mozart, Beethoven, Dvorak, Glass, Kos etc.

To choose from concerts that number in the thousands is impossible and I feel that inevitably I would have to leave out so many fine musicians. Anyone who played with pianist Shura Cherkassky in 1988 would remember



a unique piano sound from a bygone age of the great romantic piano tradition, to give just one example.

Last year I played Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with SSO Chief Conductor David Robertson. By that time I'd played all the major orchestral violin solos in the repertoire – from *Ein Heldenleben* to *Scheherazade* – but I'd never had the chance to play the *Missa*. It is a beautiful solo and I was delighted to have completed my orchestral catalogue with him.

I'd like to think that I've helped to inject a certain energy in to the style of SSO performances. I've always believed that you have to play a classical music concert at 110% in order to have any impact in this large Opera House Concert Hall. I've also tried to foster a pleasant working environment because I believe that when everyone is feeling positive, less stressed and generally enjoying the working week, the musical results are commensurate with that. I hope my style of leadership has promoted that sense of stability and wellbeing in the orchestra.

There are many milestones in one's life and I'm about to approach another one as my 60th birthday nears. I've been a Concertmaster with one orchestra or another for 40 years or more as well as maintaining a busy solo, chamber music and recording career and the most important job of all – a parent. I haven't had a lot of time to step back and look objectively at what I've been doing but now I think I will permit myself that small luxury.

Now is the time for the next phase of my life. I've achieved all that I wanted to achieve as Concertmaster of the SSO and inevitably, it's with mixed feelings that I've made this decision to step down and leave the position I have enjoyed so much. During the next few years I will concentrate on my chamber music

responsibilities, competition and festival direction and spending more time with my family.

There is nothing about playing in the SSO that I won't miss. It has all been so memorable. The orchestra is in the most capable hands with David Robertson and my Co-Concertmaster colleague Andrew Haveron, and I expect the growth and musical maturity of the SSO to continue on its upward course.

The wonderful memories of the concerts and the people I have met through the orchestra will stay with me forever. Of course, I would like to pay tribute to all my excellent colleagues whose fine musicianship and personal support have been a constant throughout my time in the orchestra.

I'm also extremely honoured to be acknowledged as Concertmaster Emeritus and will wear this badge proudly. This title enables me to continue as an advocate and ambassador for the orchestra in my many travels and musical activities. I hope to be part of the SSO musical family for many years to come.

A dynamic symphony orchestra is a vital part of the cultural life of any city and for the community there are valuable lessons to be learned if people take the trouble to notice. I was impressed once by something Daniel Barenboim said as he spoke about his West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, made up of young Israeli and Palestinian musicians. To paraphrase, he suggested that there was no better example of human cooperation than a symphony orchestra – how people could co-exist and produce something wonderful together.

Thank you all for sharing with me a fantastic musical journey.

## Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

**Lachlan Bramble**, Associate Principal 2nd Violin

Following the opening proclamation of Nicholas Carter conducting *Die Walküre* at the beginning of the year, the remaining two legs of our artistic leadership tripod finally arrived in Adelaide. Veteran of the 1998 Adelaide *Ring Cycle*, Jeffrey Tate returned in October for a pair of concerts and was greeted with great affection and nostalgia by the orchestra. And in November Pinchas Zukerman and his musical entourage led the orchestra in concerts of robust intensity. He conducted and fiddled like only he knows how. Several ASO musicians then had the opportunity to join him and his wife Amanda Forsyth in a performance of Mendelssohn's *Octet*.

In August both Emma Gregan and Alex Miller (horns) passed their trials. Likewise, Owen Morris officially became our new Principal Trumpet in October. We wish

them all many happy years in the orchestra. And at the other end of the spectrum, our Long Service Awards this year included a particularly notable milestone. Twins, Jenny and Julie Newman celebrated 40 years in the violin section of the ASO. Pity the Managing Director who had to tell them apart during the presentation.

And as the only capital city without a purpose-built concert, ASO musicians welcomed with great excitement the recently leaked proposal for a futuristic underground concert hall to be built on the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site. The plan includes rehearsal and office space and a spectacular flared entrance onto North Terrace that looks like the bell of a trumpet. While bitter experience suggests we shouldn't get our hopes up, it's much more fun to be optimistic!



Twins Julie (L) and Jenny Newman celebrating 40 years in the ASO

---

# Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra

**Mark Bruwel**, Oboe

At the time of writing this article, AOBO finds itself just about to finish its longest ever run of a musical season, some 77 performances of *My Fair Lady*. Ticket sales were apparently the highest of any season of anything at the Opera House, so that certainly justified itself financially. The National Opera Review's Final Report is now out and, perhaps not surprisingly, Helen Nugent and her panel colleagues had questions around whether Opera Australia, a major arts organisation that receives Government funding, should be moving into an area already populated with other commercial enterprises. It will be interesting to see how this pans out.

Enterprise Bargaining was just about to start up for us when the long running issue of the Orchestra's name suddenly emerged linked to a corporate re structure of OA and AOBO. The proposed integration would see the AOBO entity, a fully owned subsidiary of OA, dissolve and Orchestra members become direct employees of OA. Our name would also change to Opera Australia Orchestra. We are currently going through a consultation process with our primary stakeholders, namely OA, the Australia Council and The Australian Ballet to check there are no detrimental issues for any of us.

2017 will be a different year for the Orchestra with the Joan Sutherland Theatre being closed for the second half of the year for much needed backstage and other behind the scenes upgrades. Hopefully there will be some work done to the Pit and also the installation of a new sound system in the Theatre. The Opera House is funding this work directly and we are just waiting to have the proposed Pit work confirmed.

Our long serving Cor Anglais player, Andrew Malec, recently retired after 30 something years of dedicated service to the Orchestra. I remember when I joined the oboe section, Andrew's Cor playing was often a highlight of the performance, especially in any of the Verdi operas.

It is very nice to welcome Katherine Lukey to the Orchestra after having successfully passed her trial for the Deputy Concertmaster position.

## **UNION SHOPPER**

**unionshopper.com.au**

**1300 368 117**

for a great deal



## **ppca**

Phonographic Performance Company of Australia

## **PERFORMERS' TRUST FOUNDATION**

Providing grants to promote and encourage music and the performing arts

**www.ppca.com.au**



---

# Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

## Patrick Wong, Violin

It is probably safe to say that 2016 has been one of the more turbulent years in the MSO's recent history. The company began the year with significant projected budget deficit. This led to the redundancy of 20% of the administration staff in February, and reached a total of 40% by the end of the year. Along with other cost cutting measures the company is miraculously projecting a break even result at the end of the year. Program highlights from the year included a spectacular Brahms Violin Concerto with Israeli violinist Vadim Gluzman, the continuation of Sir Andrew Davis' Mahler cycle with the 6th Symphony, and the brilliant British pianist Paul Lewis playing all five of Beethoven's piano concerti over four concerts in just two weeks. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* with live orchestra was both a critical and commercial success, with many of the audience seeing the orchestra for the first time.

In addition to the many administration staff we lost to redundancy we have also had to farewell four long serving members of the MSO: Associate Principal Horn Geoff Lierse, Second Violin Christine Johnson, Second Trumpet Julie Payne and Principal Timpani Christine Turpin.

Geoff Lierse first played with the MSO in an all Wagner Concert in 1984 and was Associate Principal Horn from 1997-2016 after tenures as Associate Principal Horn with Orchestra Victoria and Principal Third Horn with Sydney Symphony. He was a vigorous and colourful colleague both on and off stage and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Christine Johnson first joined the MSO in 1988, then resigned less than two years later after having her first son, Tom. After

two more children she reauditioned in 1995 and won the job again, an incredible feat that is only surpassed by her even more incredible humility. She has resigned (again) to concentrate on her teaching, and on a personal note I feel very fortunate that my daughter has the opportunity to learn from such a wonderful violinist and human being.

Julie Payne joined the MSO trumpet section in 1990 after seven years as a member of Orchestra Victoria. She has been a stalwart of the orchestra for the last 26 years, establishing a reputation for consistent excellence that continues to this day. Julie's dependability and unflappable demeanour was invaluable and we wish her all the best.

Christine Turpin joined the MSO percussion section in 1981 and was appointed Principal Timpani in 1988. For the last three decades Christine has been one of only a handful of female timpanists in major orchestras around the world. She has taught many successful students including John Arcaro in the MSO, and our fellow SOMA Executive member Matthew Goddard in TSO. We would like to thank Christine for 35 years of unwavering professionalism and dedication to her craft, her colleagues and the organisation, and we will miss her ever smiling presence at the back of the orchestra.



Christine Turpin

---

# Orchestra Victoria

**Josh de Graaf**, Associate Principal Oboe

Greetings from OV, on a dreary Melbourne day of 17 degrees after yesterday's 37. You could say there's never a dull moment, except that today's been full of them. The year at OV however, has been anything but. Since I wrote last, the year has been full of ballet, chamber music festivals, recordings and the Ring Cycle – the performances of which are finally underway.

Our regional festivals have continued to grow this year in both Hamilton and Bendigo. The week long festivals combine our popular mOVe education programs, with chamber music performances by OV musicians and culminate in a full orchestral concert. As a player, it's hard not to be inspired while watching your colleagues teach, perform, inform and engage with the community.

The hope is to bring bigger and better festivals next year.

On the ballet front, children's Nutcracker recordings (narrated by Geoffrey Rush and on sale now through ABC in time for Christmas!!) were bookended by some small ballets you may have heard of – *Swan Lake* and, featuring the Houston Ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. Rounding out the ballet commitments this year were Nijinsky (Shostakovich Symphony No. 11 and *Scheherazade*) and *Coppelia*, which was performed in St Kilda's Palais Theatre in a nod to The Australian Ballet's past.

Renovations at the theatre made for some interesting added percussive sounds of drills and hammers, as well as some delightful



Julien Dupont and Mara Miller – violins-in-arms at the first rehearsal of *Rheingold*, the first opera in the Ring Cycle, October 2016.

Photo: John Noble

smells which most assumed to be the trombone section, though they are blaming a dead rat. The jury will be out for years to come I suspect.

And finally, onto the Ring. An extensive rehearsal period has come to an end and we enter performances still enthused by this amazing piece of art. OV (known for the project as the Melbourne Ring Orchestra because well, who knows?) has almost tripled in size and it's fantastic to have a larger community of musicians around us. In this, and all our other activities this year, I would like to single out our production team for their tireless efforts in assisting the musicians. It is often a thankless task but one which does not go unnoticed by the musicians.

In other matters, the end of the year will mark the end of OV's time in our Albert Park rehearsal space. The land around our building is being developed for a much needed primary school and we look forward to the

State Government delivering on a new home for OV in the not too distant future. In the interim, most of our rehearsals will take place in the St Kilda Town Hall, with administration and storage up the road in South Melbourne. Hopefully a move to the arts precinct will become a reality before too long.

On the job front, we'd like to congratulate Damien Eckersley for his appointment to the position of Principal Double Bass.

Until next time, wishing you all a safe and joyful Christmas.

Cheers, Josh



*Orchestra Victoria performing in the Orchestra Victoria Bendigo Festival*



---

# Queensland Symphony Orchestra

## Thomas Allely, Principal Tuba

2016 has been a year full of arrivals and departures for QSO.

In September this year, we lost violinist Stephen Phillips in a tragic accident. This affected all the members of our orchestra, colleagues within orchestra management, and the wider music community deeply. It's only when someone is ripped out of our lives so suddenly that we realise just how intertwined we all are.

In the weeks following Stephen's untimely passing, I found myself reflecting on the enormous contribution he made to our union and our orchestra through his activism on the QSO artistic committee, his input on the design of the studio we rehearse in, and his constant quest for higher artistic standards in everything we did. Stephen was quite a character – I remember having extended discussions with him regarding evolution, the age of the earth, and the moon landings (faked, according to Stephen). He was a formidable presence in QSO, his rhetorical feats of virtuosity, which I hope I am not remiss in dubbing Phillipic, in orchestral and committee meetings were legendarily verbose and loquacious. His absence will be keenly felt.

I'd like to thank all our sister orchestras for their messages of condolence and support – our community of musicians is tightly knit and we do all take care of each other when the chips are down, which is heartening to see.

We also say goodbye to Helen Poggioli (Viola) this year, off to a well earned retirement. From the management team, we have said goodbye to our directors of Development, Philanthropy, and Marketing.

Concert highlights since our last report have included *Pines of Rome* and *Til Eulenspiegel* with our Music Director Designate Alondra de la Parra, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 with Maxim Vengerov in a conducting role. We continued touring, taking in Townsville and Gladstone, and as I write we are soon to begin our usual *Nutcracker*, *Messiah* and *Spirit of Christmas* run to the end of the year.

We welcomed David Pratt, our new Chief Executive Officer in September, and 2017 sees us officially beginning our partnership with our Music Director Alondra de la Parra. In 2017 we expect to hold 7 auditions, which should go a long way towards filling the vacancies we have been carrying the last few years.



QSO Horns collaborate with the American Horn Quartet in a CD recording.  
Front row: Peter Luff (Associate Principal QSO), Kristina Mascher-Turner (AHQ), Malcolm Stewart (Principal QSO) and Ian O'Brien (Principal Third QSO)  
Back Row: Charles Putnam (AHQ), Vivienne Collier -Vickers (Horn QSO) and Lauren Manuel (Horn QSO).

---

# Sydney Symphony Orchestra

## Geoff O'Reilly, Principal 3rd Horn

As the 2016 season comes to a close I would like to thank all the guest conductors and soloists that have joined us this year. A special thanks to our Australian Conductors Toby Thatcher, Brett Weymark, Matthew Coorey, Ben Northey and Brett Dean. Thank you all for contributing to the Sydney Symphony.

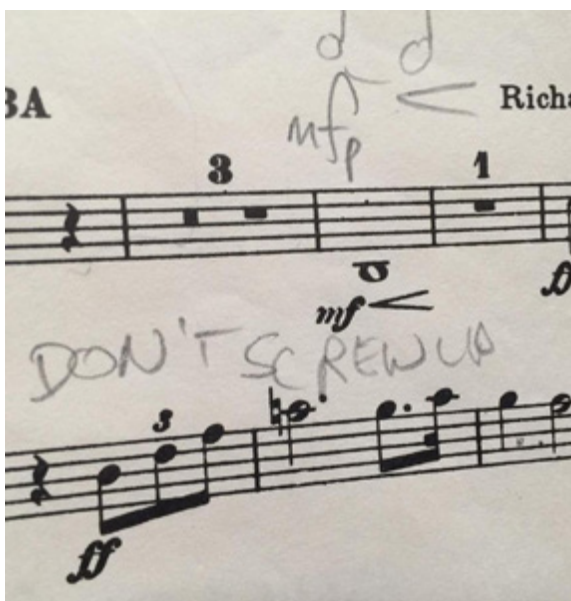
The Orchestra has presented some great concerts in the last six months. We had a great visit from pianist Lang Lang. The Brass Ensemble toured to Wollongong, Canberra and Melbourne with James Sommerville – Conductor and Principal Horn with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Other visiting artists gracing the concert hall have been John Wilson, Lothar Koenigs, Marcelo Lehninger and the amazing Violinist-Conductor Pinchas Zukerman.

Since the last edition of *Senza Sord*, we have completed part two of the Beethoven cycle with Maestro Ashkenazy. The project

was a fantastic success and it ended a six week split-stay with the maestro for 2016. The August visit of Chief Conductor David Robertson was all about Stravinsky; we visited the works of *The Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*. David's final visit for this year will see the orchestra stage *Porgy and Bess* – it is going to be an exciting project welcoming the cast from the US.

This year we welcomed to the 2nd violin section Rebecca Gil, Monique Irik and Wendy Kong. We also say farewell to two of our much loved musicians: Principal Flute Janet Webb and Co-Concertmaster Dene Olding. Janet has had an amazing 30-year career with the orchestra, whilst Dene has spent 21 years in two stints; first from 1987-1994 then 2002-2016. We wish both Janet and Dene every success for the next phase of their lives.

To finish off, members of the SSO management committee have devoted nearly 15 months updating our EBA using inter-based negotiations with management. This journey has almost come to a successful end. As usual we must thank Howard for his guidance and time devoted to the project. We at the SSO simply say THANK YOU Howard. We sincerely hope you enjoy what life offers you and your family in the years to come.



---

# Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

**Matt Goddard**, Principal Timpani

At the time of writing, Chief Conductor Marko Letonja has just arrived back in town and we are gearing up for our last couple of concerts for the year, the first of which was a stunning concert of excerpts from *Tristan und Isolde* featuring Nina Stemme, Stuart Skelton and Monika Bohinec. It was a real highlight for everybody. To finish the year we have two weeks of rehearsal for our tour to China. We leave very early on Boxing Day morning and will be away for two weeks. It will be a busy trip with nine concerts during our time there. We will have three programmes in all which include works of Johann Strauss II during the first week in anticipation of the New Year and a joint concert on New Year's Eve with the Jiangsu Symphony Orchestra. Principal Double Bass, Stuart Thomson, will be performing Tan Dun's *The Wolf (Double Bass Concerto)* throughout the tour and

other works include Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*, *Dances of Galanta* by Kodaly as well as works by Elena Kats-Chernin and Julian Yu. Our final performance in Shanghai will be recorded for broadcast in China. We'll be ready for a well-earned month off when we return on January 9th!

Congratulations to Stefanie Farrands (Principal Viola) who recently won the Freedman Classical Fellowship for 2016. Stef will use the \$20 000 scholarship to commission new works for viola.

As we approach the end of her first season with us we're very pleased that Concertmaster, Emma McGrath, has finished her trial and is here to stay. Doug Coghill has also recently passed his trial as Tutti Viola. In other new

arrivals, congratulations to Rohana O'Malley (Tutti Violin) and husband Ryan on the birth of their daughter, Kentia.

On the industrial front, we'll be commencing negotiations early next year for our next Enterprise Agreement, which falls due at the beginning of May next year. It's hard to believe that three years has passed and that it's time again. All of us at TSO would like to express our gratitude to Howard Manley for all his help and advice with these matters over past years and to wish him all happiness for his retirement.



Photo: Alistair Bett

(from L to R) Monika Bohinec, Stuart Skelton and Nina Stemme taking their bows with Chief Conductor Marko Letonja and the orchestra after the performance of excerpts from *Tristan und Isolde*.



---

# West Australian Symphony Orchestra

## Kierstan Arkleysmith, Viola

Since the last edition of *Senza Sord*, WASO has increased in size. Unfortunately this has not been an increase in the number of players, but rather the size of the players! The challenge of consuming two buffet meals daily being a highlight of our four-day tour to Abu Dhabi (see Julia's tour blog).

We have also filled some vacant seats with successful trials. Kate Sullivan joined the violin section and has recently also joined the growing ranks of scooter riders. Kylie Liang is now Associate Principal 2nd Violin, leaving vacant her previous position as Assistant Principal 2nd Violin, and Brian Maloney joined us as Principal Percussion. Brian hails from the USA and since arriving in Perth has joined the ultimate frisbee club and fallen in love with good coffee.

Opportunities in the land of fabulous coffee and excellent scooter riding are now limited. Tutti Violin and Assistant Principal 2nd Violin auditions are being held at the end of November while the Associate Concertmaster panel has met to discuss Expressions of Interest. Principal and Tutti Viola auditions will occur in the new year.

Onstage we've had some sellout concerts including a Simone Young spectacular program of *The Planets* and *Rite of Spring* and two of Guy Noble's easy listening concerts. Morning Symphony concerts continue to sell very well.

Also onstage we have new risers and some magnets on the doors allowing players to exit the stage without waiting for someone to unlatch the door from the other side! Large scale improvements however remain

fantasies, but rumour has it that the WA State Government intends spending money on the arts if re-elected!

In October some of us participated in a union training workshop with Karene Walton. It seems there is no end to the variables in such workshops and Karene was as dynamic and inspiring as ever. It was also an opportunity to get some understanding of the SOMA/MEAA structure. The lunch was also good.

Our EBA is current until the end of 2016 and we hope to begin meetings before the close of the year.

On a happy note, Mel (Violin and Players Association secretary) and Brendon Pearn produced baby No.4, Vada Maisie Pearn, born on October 31 and weighing just short of 4kg.

Sarah Blackman (Violin) announced her engagement to David Sandercock (brother of violinist, Louise) and Jenna Boston (Orchestral Operations Manager) married David Costello just two weeks after returning from Abu Dhabi and China – as if tour logistics weren't enough!

Sadly at the end of 2016 we will say farewell to Graham Pyatt. Graham has been a permanent member of WASO since 1993 and for several years he acted as Principal 1st Violin. He intends dedicating some of his time to the consumption of red wine.

Finally, from everyone in WASO a massive thank you to Howard for the years of support.

---

# New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

**Carolyn Mills**, Principal Harp

The NZSO's Board, Chief Executive, and Chief Financial Officer worked extremely hard and strategically for many months ahead of the Government's release of budget decisions for 2016. Our funding had been frozen for eight years. The musicians are grateful to our fiscally responsible management for ensuring our survival during this long rather dry spell.

We are now happy to report that in May of 2016 we received news that the Government has allocated another \$1.2 million annually to the NZSO. In the current economic climate of frequent cuts across many sectors, this is a major victory for the Orchestra.

Some of the new resources were immediately used to schedule free family concerts in various smaller communities around the country, which were a great success in terms of both audience outreach and community goodwill. The organisation is also now looking forward to planning our future with more confidence.

Our future was the main agenda item on a recent Futures Day held between Board, Senior Managers, Players Committee and Principals. All parties acknowledge our quickly changing environment, and the fact that orchestras need to look hard at every aspect of our activities.

The musicians worked feverishly to create a video presentation that would reflect our vision for the future of the Orchestra and the possibilities we believe are currently or soon within our reach. This was enthusiastically received. We are very happy to report that the Board and Management are thinking along similar lines, and there is confidence that we can

work collaboratively towards innovation that we will need in the new world of changing demographics and connectedness.

Our musical relationship with Edo de Waart continues to deepen. Some highlights of the season include Mahler's Symphony No.4 and Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, which toured the country, and the recent program of Mozart's *Piano Concerto in C minor* and Elgar's Symphony No.1. Edo's combination of a meticulous rehearsal style and openness and trust during performance creates the right chemistry for some unforgettable concerts.

Also of particular note were the recent soundtrack backings of the archival film footage from the Battle of the Somme.



*Sharyn Evans and Brian Shillito*

Sponsored by the British High Commission, these free events drew large audiences and media interest. The score was written by English composer Laura Rossi.

Two of our wonderful long serving colleagues have recently retired. Brian Shillito, Viola Sub-Principal Emeritus, leaves after 37 years with the NZSO, and Second Violinist Sharyn Evans departs with an amazing 47 years service. We are sad to bid them farewell, but thank them whole heartedly for their tremendous contributions. Another farewell is to Lloyd Hudson, Principal Piccolo, who sadly for us has decided to return to Tasmania, and we welcome back Second Violinist Megan Molina from parenting leave after the birth of her second son, Tristan.

Our future move into the Wellington Town Hall continues to occupy a top priority position. Plans were pushed back somewhat however, when structural engineers informed the orchestra, university, and city council that some of the basement space which had been allocated for storage will have to be filled in for seismic strengthening. Given recent events here, it seems unlikely that anyone will be inclined to argue with them. It means that now architects will need to revise plans for fitting out the space in a way suitable for all the parties. Our Town Hall consultation group are working to make sure it will all be worth the wait.

## SOMA EXECUTIVE MEETING

Melbourne, November 20-21 – Agenda

- SOMA Financials & Membership
- Honorary membership
- National Opera Review Final Report
- ICSOM Conference Report
- FIM Conference Montreal
- Industrial Report
- Expressions of interest
- *Senza Sord*
- Orchestra Reports
- Sick leave for casuals
- Interest based bargaining – pros and cons
- Supporting Overseas Orchestras
- Industrial Campaigns

### OTHER INFORMATION

If you are a member of SOMA, you should also be receiving fairly regular emails from MEAA specifically related to SOMA issues. If this is not the case, perhaps this is a good time to update your email address with MEAA!

### Contact

MEAA Member Central  
Phone: 1300 656 513  
Email: [members@meaa.org](mailto:members@meaa.org)

And for your information the Pay Roll Deduction payment option for SOMA membership fees has been made available on the 'Join MEAA' online application form ([meaa.org](http://meaa.org)).



## Vale: Stephen Phillips

The orchestra was rocked during rehearsals for the Brisbane Festival in September by news of a terrible car accident in New Zealand. Stephen Phillips, a QSO violinist, was on leave for a family reunion of his partner, Belinda Williams, who plays viola casually with our orchestra. With them were her daughter and two sons; tragically only Belinda and her daughter survived the accident, but both are recovering well.

Stephen was a great and entertaining friend of mine since the early 80s, when we studied together at the Queensland Conservatorium. He descended from Bundaberg like an elemental force, very talented, undisciplined, with searing passion and insight: not an easy fit as a student, but an inspiration. All through the years he has remained a highly colourful and amusing person, with singular abilities and outlooks.

When he joined the QSO in 1987 he wanted to play in the first violins, so he went to the house of Theodore Lazaroff, the concertmaster at the time, armed with the first fiddle part of Shostakovich 5, and calmly shot off blistering passages. A cautious respect was born of the encounter; thereafter, Stephen was always appreciated as the player who knew the fingerboard backwards from the bridge, who could provide juddering attacks



on entries sufficient for the whole section, and who could imitate anything from a saxophone to a sitar to entertain his colleagues.

His memory, however, will be prevailingly that of a courteous, gentle man who spent an incredible amount of time helping others, using his prodigious talents in music and in sound technology to further others' initiatives.

He is much missed by the orchestra, and for his many closer friends the loss of Stephen, with his unique personality and charm, will be mourned always.

### **Warwick Adeney**

Concertmaster

Queensland Symphony Orchestra



# MEAA Application Form – SOMA Section

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ Orchestra hereby make application to join the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (and its related State registered unions where they exist) as a member of the Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association (SOMA), and agree to be bound by its rules and Constitution as amended from time to time.

Title: ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Mrs ☐ Mr

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Pcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_

(work) \_\_\_\_\_

(mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Employment Status: ☐ Permanent ☐ Casual ☐ Weekly Contract

## Method of Payment

Payment may be made in one of the following methods.

Please indicate your preference (choose **ONE ONLY**) with ✓ in the appropriate box

☐ cash/cheque ☐ credit card (please indicate your preference below)

☐ one off payment ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ half-yearly ☐ yearly

Credit Card Details:

☐ Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Name of cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_ / \_\_

☐ direct debit financial institution – four weekly deduction only (please complete the PDC form attached)

☐ employer deduction from regular pay (please complete the section below)

## Payroll Deduction Authorisation

To the Paymaster:

I wish to authorize payment of my subscription to the Symphony Orchestra Musicians Association to be paid by fortnightly payroll deduction to the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_

Please complete this application form and hand it to your SOMA delegate/ committee member or mail directly to :

Alliance Membership Centre  
Locked Bag 526  
Spring Hill QLD 4004

Phone: 1300 65 65 13

Email: [members@meaa.aust.com](mailto:members@meaa.aust.com)

Internet: <http://www.alliance.org.au>

Alliance membership fees are levied annually by Federal Council in consultation with the SOMA Executive. All membership fees are tax deductible. If you leave the industry and wish to resign your membership, you must do so in writing to your Branch Secretary, in other cases, three months written notice of resignation must be given.