

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra Inc.

President's Report 2002-3

Councillor John Abi-Saad, Maestro Bard, Distinguished Members, welcome to the AGM of the SSO.

It is my honour to present the President's Report on the activities of the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra for the year 2002-3. This is in one way a sad duty in that I am standing in for our elected President, Russell Watson who cannot be with us tonight. Russell unfortunately has suffered a serious illness and has relinquished his position as President.

Russell has been the President of the Orchestra since 1997. Under his leadership the Orchestra has enjoyed a stable and financially responsible leadership which has seen relationship with our sponsoring organisation, Strathfield Council improve and deepen.

During the year the Orchestra staged five concerts with an average attendance at each of around 300 people. The Orchestra has continued to flourish musically under the clear baton and musical director ship of Maestro Bard. His is now a nine year partnership with the Orchestra. We are indeed fortunate to have a conductor with the skill, experience and creative musicality of this great conductor. He has nurtured, coached and led the Orchestra to ever greater musical heights. For me, Maestro Bard and the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra are inextricably linked.

The Committee has continued the practice of inviting a guest conductor to work with the Orchestra for one concert. We were fortunate this year (through the good offices of Maestro Bard) to secure the services of Erich Fackert. Despite Erich being based in Melbourne he was able to challenge the orchestra to strive for greater heights of musical achievement. Erich returned this year as a soloist with the Orchestra in a very powerful and spirited performance of the Weber Clarinet concerto at our most recent concert.

We thank the Council for the regular use of this lovely Town hall as our rehearsal and performance venue. Without the stable foundation of this base, there would be no orchestra. The Orchestra recognizes the two way nature of this obligation and as always was pleased to again stage a special performance for senior citizens week as our first performance of the year. Also over the last year the Strathfield Quartet, comprised of members from the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra has delivered a musical program for a number of citizenship ceremonies hosted by Strathfield Council. The quartet also provided the pre dinner music for the very successful Mayoral Ball.

During the year Miriam Hyde, distinguished composer, performer and longtime member the SSO celebrated her 90th birthday. We congratulate her on this achievement and thank her for her continuing support of the Orchestra.

This year saw the formal incorporation of the Organisation as the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra Inc. The new formal legal form provides the members and office holders of the Society with greater protection in the event of litigation and enabled us to secure appropriate public liability insurance. Most of the credit for this achievement must go to Laura Jamieson who drove the process of developing the documents and formally lodging them with the Department of Fair Trading.

There are a number of generally unsung heroes and heroines without whom the Orchestra would not function. The contribution of some of whom, who are not formally on the Committee, I would like to mention:

- Ted Davies- Always the first to arrive to set up the orchestra and the last to leave after organizing the refreshments at the break and packing the Orchestra up.
- Geoff Widmer – Who’s metal working has resulted in the construction of riser platforms for the brass and woodwind.
- Bruce Dunlop – Who keeps our financial accounting up to scratch.

I also wish to highlight the contribution of members of your Committee over the last year:

- Roger Barker – Who in addition to his secretarial role has contributed his woodworking skills to refurbishing the conductor’s podium and stand.
- Shirley Mahableshwarwalla – As assistant secretary she manages the day to day relationship with the officers of Strathfield Council.
- Laura Jamieson - who took on the duty of Treasurer in addition to the role of Publicity Officer and has been working on the Orchestra’s website.
- Margaret Shirley – Our Orchestra Manager who ensures we have the requisite musical forces for each performance.
- Beatrice Yip and Vincent Leonard who acquire, issue and recover the music used in our performances.

The Strathfield Symphony Orchestra has enjoyed another year of fine music making, its thirty third in this Municipality. We look forward to ever greater musical heights and audiences in the year to come.

Chris Elenor
Vice President