

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra Inc.

Report by the President for 2004-2005

Councillor, Bill Carney

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 Incorporated for the year 2004-5.

During the year the Orchestra staged five concerts with an average attendance at each of around 300 people. We were fortunate to have Mathew Wood as conductor for our second concert which featured Beethoven 7. Over the last year the Orchestra has continued the tradition of programming an Australian work for each concert. We were fortunate to be able to feature a work by our own Vincent Leonard "Daily Travels of a Komuso" at our October concert along with the demanding Dvorak Symphony No 7. The December concert featured the world premier of a new work, The Scatterlings and Ancient Dust by Nadia Burgess as well as a Vivaldi flute concerto performed by our talented conductor Paul Dhasmana.

Our first concert for 2005 was dedicated to Miriam Hyde who died in January. We played two of her pieces Waltzing Matilda Variations and Village Fair Miriam, her husband and the Edwards family have a long association with the Orchestra and we were fortunate to have Miriam as a soloist with the Orchestra and several occasions, I particularly remember her playing her Second Piano Concerto under the baton of Maestro Bard.

Paul Dhasmana, as our resident conductor has led the work of the orchestra over the last year. In my view he has done some terrific work; from recruiting players, developing focus, discipline and attention to detail through to making the most effective use of rehearsal time. Whilst there is still great potential for improvement, performances by the orchestra under his baton have been on an upward curve. The Orchestra has continued the practice of asking a guest conductor to take on one concert cycle each year. We have been fortunate to have Maestro Bard on the rostrum for our upcoming Family Concert.

We have also been very fortunate this year to again have the leadership of Paul Pokorny as our Concertmaster and soloist. Paul has played a huge part in pulling together the rhythmic and tonal precision of the Orchestra and in developing the confidence and depth of the strings over the last year. He has also made a big contribution to the management of the Orchestra and planning the forward program for the Orchestra.

There have been a number of performance innovations over the last year. This includes moving to play concerts on the floor of the Town hall to avoid the loss of brass and wood wind sound behind the stage drapes and proscenium arch and playing in all black. This is a move which has not pleased everyone but which I think lifts the look of the orchestra at performances. We have also been recording the concerts, thanks to Bruce Lane our treasurer for this initiative.

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.

There are a number of generally unsung heroes and heroines without whom the Orchestra would not function. Two of these people are Margaret Shirley who has been our Orchestra Manager for many years and Beatrice IP our Librarian. The Orchestra Manager ensures we have the requisite musical forces for each performance and I think it is one of the most difficult and demanding jobs on the Committee; closely followed by Librarian who has the task of ensuring we have all the correct parts for each piece for all the players. I would like to recognize their contribution and thank them on behalf of the Orchestra for the excellent work they have done over many years. Others I would like to mention are:

- 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.
- Bruce Dunlop – Who keeps our financial accounting up to scratch.
- Roger Barker - the anchor of the Strathfield String Quartet.

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

- Merryn Horrocks our efficient Secretary who has brought some order to the constant email traffic between Committee members
- Shirley Mahableshwarwalla – As assistant secretary she manages the day to day relationship with the officers of Strathfield Council.
- Laura Jamieson - who in addition to the role of Publicity Officer who has relaunched the Orchestra's web presence on our own website and organized our successful Christmas raffle.
- Bruce Lane, our treasurer who in addition to prising subscriptions from reluctant pockets, acquired some additional funds for us through advertising and has been playing an important role for us in conductor liaison and concert program planning.
- Beatrice Yip and Vincent Leonard who acquire, issue and recover the music used in our performances. Beatrice has spent much time put together an excellent spreadsheet catalogue of the Orchestra's library. This has already proved its value in assisting concert program planning.

Last but certainly not least, I wish to recognize those Orchestra members who turn up early to assemble the stage and the risers, the chairs and the stands; and then stay behind after the performance to strip it all down again.

The Strathfield Symphony Orchestra has enjoyed another year of fine music making, its thirty fifth in this Municipality. In this period of change and transition, we look forward to ever greater musical heights and audiences in the year to come.

Chris Elenor
President
6 June 2005