

## AGSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2008

Presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Accompanists' Guild of South Australia

Activities of the GUILD seem to have become more adventurous over the past few years and 2008 must count as the most adventurous to date. With each year's success stories, we find that the public awareness of the Guild's presence is growing & with it the support.

To begin at the beginning: Early in 2007 AGSA realized that 2008 would be our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and something extraordinary was needed to celebrate. One of the world's foremost accompanists as Musician in Residence - possibly someone who'd been associated with Geoffrey Parsons - seemed like a good idea. We can be thankful for the international connections that our students have made. Diana - through her former student David Barnard - was able to contact Malcolm Martineau - put the residency idea to him which he was delighted to do but only on the proviso that it fitted in with his hectic touring schedule. He nominated 10 days in May/June and AGSA fitted everything in our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year around his availability.

Having Malcolm Martineau - "accompanist to the stars" - as a drawcard for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival of Accompanists made many other projects and connections possible.

Amongst these connections which made possible the financing of the entire Festival - including the Inaugural Australian 3 day Conference of Accompanists and Associate Artists - were

- The Elder Conservatorium - particularly in terms of accommodation, The Geoffrey Parsons Award, the Friday lunch time recital, the closing recital and hosting Malcolm as musician in residence at the Conservatorium
- Recitals Australia - our partners in presenting Malcolm's Recital with the wonderful New Zealand/Samoan bass baritone, Jonathan Lemalu
- Alliance Française and the French Embassy who supported the Martineau/Lemalu recital
- Allans Music for their continuing support of all AGSA activities
- The Geoffrey Parsons Memorial Trust - London - who forwarded a one off donation which covered the \$5000 first prize for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Geoffrey Parsons Award.
- Arts SA grant - which supported the need for more extensive professional publicity for the Festival and Conference
- The Adelaide City Council who sponsored the very successful Young Accompanists on Show at Pilgrim Church which showcased not only our young talent in the 12.10 concert but also the talents of ex Adelaidean, David Barnard, who performed with members of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra at 1.10 & gave a masterclass to young performers in the 12.10 concert
- Pilgrim Church who donated the use of all facilities for the Young Accompanists on Show
- Yamaha Music Australia who sponsored all of the youth projects in the Festival including one of the four masterclasses Malcolm took outside of his Conservatorium commitments
- Winston Music who sponsored all David Barnard's appearances through the support of the SA Premier's Arts Partnership Fund
- ABC Classic FM who recorded several events with a view to including them in some of Graham Abbott's programs
- ANATS - Singing teachers - who sponsored one of Malcolm's four public masterclasses
- The many donors great and small, made either through AbaF (Australia Business Arts Foundation) which were tax deductible, or others who donated without attracting tax deductions.
- The AGSA members who decided to become Life Members in 2008 and by doing bolstered our funds as well as providing encouragement.

As our musician in residence was available only in May, we couldn't use our usual Festival time of July so it meant an early start to preparations & considerable use of Diana's persuasive powers when it came to booking venues and encouraging the many presenters and delegates to come at that busy time of year.

The "Major Contributors" for the Conference were all well known figures: Martineau, Lemalu, Graham Abbott who interviewed Martineau, Stephen McIntyre from Melbourne & David Miller from Sydney taking instrumental masterclasses, Suzanne Witham from the Queensland Guild & Diana herself of course, whose work for this venture covered everything from a to z!

The first concert of the Conference was given by MM & David Barnard (ex-Adelaide, now working in London), with Adelaide singers Emma Horwood, Mary-Ann van der Hoek, Robert McFarlane & Thomas Flint in the not-often heard Brahms Liebeslieder Waltzes.

Malcolm M. took four public masterclasses for piano/voice duos ranging from top level professionals to a class for secondary school students. This latter was a particularly memorable session as, realizing that one singer hadn't appeared, Malcolm stepped in to sing the part himself so that the pianist wouldn't be left out of the program – what a huge repertoire he must have!

Highlights of the Conference were:

1. the wonderfully inspiring & stimulating recital by Jonathan Lemalu & Malcolm Martineau in Elder Hall for which Elizabeth Silsbury wrote a glowing & brilliantly detailed review,
2. the Anniversary Celebration Dinner at Ayers House,
3. the amazing range of topics relating to accompanists and accompanying presented by delegates from all states in Australia, and
4. the Geoffrey Parsons Award, which was the "centrepiece"

For something as "high profile" as this, the prize amount for the **Geoffrey Parsons Award** was raised from the \$2500 of the previous 3 years to \$6000, with \$5000 going to the first place winner.

Winner for this year was Amanda Hodder from Melbourne, accompanying the tenor Benjamin Martin.

Second place was given to Adelaide's Alexander Hanysz with violinist Melanie Radtke.

The judges for the Award were Malcolm Martineau (chair), interstate celebrities Stephen McIntyre & David Miller, joined by well known locals Elizabeth Koch (from the Elder Conservatorium) & Diana.

I've just re-read a list of quotes we collected from many of the attendees at the Conference. They're worth collating for future print – all extremely enthusiastic, surprised & grateful comments about the organization, standard & value of the event. If future committees could manage to periodically stage other such events they could be sure of widespread support.

Having achieved/survived the major event of the year earlier than usual, we had a breathing space in which to bask in the glory of one success before preparing for the next project – our

### **July Pilgrim Church concerts.**

These represented of 4 levels of development – performances from students of Primary schools, Secondary schools and Tertiary students through to Professionals.

*Wed July 9*

12. 10pm Junior Accompanists Primary Level    1.10pm Tertiary Level Performers

*Wed July 16*

12.10pm Secondary School Accompanists        1.10 pm Professional Musicians

The final excitement of the year was the **Young Accompanists Showcase** which was held again at Brighton High School, courtesy of the Head of Music Jeffrey Kong. August 24 was the date of the Masterclass, most effectively taken by Ashleigh Tobin. September 14 saw the Public Concert which closed the Showcase.

With all these well-received events & so much support, 2008 has been a "bumper" year.

Arts SA, having already helped with the Conference, then quite unexpectedly gave us a further grant of \$5000 in recognition of our outstanding events to be used for AGSA in the latter half of 2008! The latter part of the year is generally a quiet time for the Guild but fortunately we had transferred the YAS to August/September so part of the grant was used to cover that. As there was still more to spend the Guild decided to produce a special Silver Anniversary edition of the Register which is now being compiled.

It's been my privilege to serve as president & I'd like to say a huge "thank you" to all the committee & helpers who have made 2008 such an amazing success.

Monika Laczofy

AGSA President 2008.

John Dunn Hall

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009