

CENTRAL COAST CONSERVATORIUM Inc.
President's Report for the year ending 31st December 2018

During 2018 Central Coast Conservatorium faced many challenges. These included consolidating our position regarding premises, updating our marketing and communication, and seeking new sources of financial support through increased grant applications and approaching local sponsors. Our priorities remain unchanged:

- that music education programs remain core to all decision-making within our organisation
- to maintain the excellent quality of our Schools Program
- to nurture artistically important programs, even when they may be unprofitable
- to promote and support local and international performers through our Events Calendar
- to create professional development opportunities for teachers, staff and students
- to support the administration staff
- to protect the safety and wellbeing of our students by working closely with the *Office of the Children's Guardian* and respecting its certifications
- to ensure our finances remain robust and can support our initiatives and programmes

We are also mindful of the ongoing need to maintain and upgrade the Conservatorium's premises, its general equipment and facilities, and to continue to advance our instrument hire program, which is so vital for students, especially those who are disadvantaged.

To properly formulate and address these challenges, the Central Coast Conservatorium's Board of Management made a decision at the 2018 Strategic Planning Day, facilitated by Mark Cleary, to create four specialist subcommittees. These were a Premises Subcommittee, a Marketing Subcommittee, a Teaching and Music Subcommittee and a Finance Subcommittee.

The Premises Subcommittee, chaired by Claire Braund, with Patrick Brennan and Peter Brandon as committee members, has been a driving force to help make CCCM the trustee for our heritage building here at 45 Mann St, and to gain grants and sponsorships to restore and develop these premises. Claire has also researched and developed a *CCCM Skills Matrix* to ensure our Board moves forward with the full range of skills essential for the CCCM to thrive. In connection with upgrading our premises, I'd like to thank Anthony Kelly, who is the Principal Architect with ADG Architects. Anthony has given much time to working on ideas and designs to expand 45 Mann Street and create new community performance spaces.

The Marketing Subcommittee, chaired by Ian Hemphill, has introduced innovative and effective marketing strategies that have reinvigorated the CCCM's community profile. Ian's strategies are ensuring that all of the Con's

existing performance and educational opportunities plus exciting new ones are widely promoted. Regrettably Ian is unable to renominate for a position on the Board due to extensive work commitments. However, we are pleased that he will continue to be a consultant for the Marketing Subcommittee. His expertise and insights in this area are valuable and greatly appreciated.

The Subcommittee for Teaching and Music, chaired by Hilary Day, and before Hilary by Charmian Gadd, has been working to ensure that feedback from teachers and staff has been incorporated into Board strategies, and music and educational programs are developed and integrated effectively. Hilary is Central Coast Conservatorium's longest serving Board member, and her wealth of musical knowledge plus her depth of knowledge of the structure and workings of the Conservatorium are absolutely invaluable to the organisation. I cannot recall a time when Hilary was not correct in her summation of any practical, political or artistic agenda.

The Finance Subcommittee, chaired by Michael Mitchelmore, has worked closely with former Treasurer Vinay Srivastava and Financial Controller Rod Bowman to ensure that the CCCM remains compliant and that our finances are in a strong position moving forward. We are grateful to Sharon O'Malley and Kathrin Saunders from Saige Accountants for their ongoing commitment to the CCCM auditing process.

In association with Artistic Director and CEO Patrick Brennan, the members of these four subcommittees have worked tirelessly to try and create opportunities to advance the interests of CCCM, to help face its challenges, and deliver solutions through innovation and new direction.

After giving inestimable service to the Board, Charmian Gadd decided in 2018 to stand down from her membership, and we are very sorry to lose her. She has been one of our most esteemed members, offering much creative advice and input. However, we are delighted that Charmian is continuing her support of our organisation by agreeing to become Patron for Central Coast Conservatorium of Music, and we thank her for assuming that role. Through her Charmian & Friends Concert Series, Charmian continues to raise funds for the Patrons Fund for the String Department. Thanks should also go to Tony Gault, Phillip Shovk and Georg Pederson who have been key performers for Charmian & Friends.

Charmian organises the Crossroads Chamber Music Festival each year in conjunction with the CCCM. The festival plays a vital role in bringing internationally acclaimed musicians to the Central Coast. It creates performance opportunities for teachers and students from the CCCM, allowing students the chance to play alongside professionals in a serious yet relaxed and playful environment.

Teachers are the mainstay of our organisation. The CCCM Teacher Professional Development Award was launched in 2018. The program recognises CCCM Teachers' long-term commitment to the Conservatorium. The Award is in the form of a monetary grant and is intended to support artistic

exploration among musicians. It is our hope that the CCCM Teacher Professional Development Award will inspire teachers to make connections that will prove useful both personally and to the Conservatorium.

It is with great pleasure that the Board extends congratulations to the recipients of our first CCCM's TPDA: Michael Archer and Phillip Rutherford. Particular thanks go to Stephen Stanke and Phillip Shovk who volunteered to adjudicate the award.

I would also like to thank our Heads of Programs. The HOP's play an important part in ensuring that each faculty operates in an effective and coordinated manner. Karina Hollands, Head of Strings, has worked very hard with the Rotary String Scholarship and the Historical Instrument Project. Sean Steel, with assistance and mentoring from Phillip Rutherford, has made sure that the Schools Program continues to thrive. Carl Schmidt developed strategic timetabling for teaching rooms so that the move from 35 Mann Street could take place. A special thanks to Rod Bowman who worked round the clock physically moving equipment into 45 Manns Street during the holiday break, and thus minimised disruption to our CCCM programs. Rod has also taken the initiative to ensure the CCCM takes part in the NSW Governments *Creative Kids Rebate* program. Though short-staffed, Rod and all our administration team have worked very hard to ensure our new year gets underway smoothly.

Many thanks must go to Fiona Lugg who over the last two years has been carefully compiling and ordering the CCCM music library. Also thanks to the many people who have donated music and recordings. All these donations are a valuable resource for both students and teachers. Thanks also to those kind people who have donated instruments to the Conservatorium. Some of these instruments are cherished, precious, and of great family value. Their gift to the Conservatorium is of inestimable value. Thank you to Rosalie Paino and Meldi Arkinstall for helping with marketing and promotion during Lisa Kelly's leave of absence.

A big thank you to volunteers. Phillip Jordan has diligently maintained the front gardens. It is lovely walking up the steps into this beautiful old building. Simon Castle has made repairs to the roof and carried out other structural work. Dave Newton constructed workbenches, making it possible for CCCM students to complete homework and other related tasks.

Music takes a lot of time and a lot of devotion, and I'd like to acknowledge the parents and families of our music students. I know what studying music takes. I know the sacrifices. As a parent, I've been there myself. It is hard and it is expensive. But the dividend music pays is not in terms of learned skill, of benefits to all-round personal development. It is in terms of compassion and appreciation of beauty that are forever life enhancing and life changing. They are values that nothing else can give. That is what the Con stands for: inciting that sense of unexpected joy and elevation, of astonishment, that deep connection and sudden closeness to life, to feel love, joy, and yes – sometimes to feel sadness and tragedy and loss. Touching people's hearts in this way is

music's rare privilege. Music will remain a lifelong faithful companion through good times and bad. What better gift can you give a child?

So an extra thank you to all the members of the community who faithfully attend our concerts and events. The role of the audience is vital to the success of a performance. One cannot underestimate the importance of an appreciative and sympathetic audience. Last year's opera, *La Bohème*, was well attended and a great success for Central Coast Opera's production team and performers. Central Coast Conservatorium's staging of *La Bohème* represented a wonderful opportunity for professional musicians and students to work together. Ray Allen and the Allen family's support and enthusiasm for this project ensure its success.

Many thanks to Claire Braund for organising the presentations with Dr Anita Collins for the Central Coast community talks and the very successful Professional Development for our CCCM teachers. Also thanks to Adam Manning our UoN representative who will no longer be on the Board as the University has relinquished their trusteeship of 45 Mann Street. However I'm delighted Adam has offered to continue his involvement going forward as a consultant to Patrick Brennan.

Peter Brandon has been one of our longest serving members of the Board. I have worked closely alongside Peter on strategies to resolve many difficult issues and celebrated many victories for the CCCM. Thank you, Peter, for all your support and advice.

Special thanks to outgoing Vice-President Vinay Srivastava who has made the difficult decision after many years of service to the CCCM in his roles as Treasurer and Vice-President to not renominate. I would like to express the Board's sincerest gratitude to Vinay for his many years of devotion and commitment. He has been an integral, trustworthy and reliable part of the Board's decision-making process, and the wealth of experience, practicality and rich creativity of his contribution will be difficult to replace.

Many thanks to our sponsors. You not only support the CCCM with money but also with innovation for programs, and specialist knowledge from so many areas of expertise. Thank you for the huge commitment you bring, and for ensuring fair and equal opportunities across all sectors of the community.

And if there's one last thanks, it's to our students, who are the lifeblood of Central Coast Conservatorium, it's reason for existing, it's inspiration and it's future. I wish you all well.

I have decided to step down from the Board and not renominate. I have served the CCCM in the roles of Secretary and President and have been honoured to work with many fine people over this period, to name just a few who haven't received a mention so far: Mary-Ellen Wallace, Robyn Wand, John Kellaway Greg Woolnough, Liz Hemphill. All have made a wonderful contribution.

And finally to those Board members who have renominated - Peter Brandon, Mike Mitchelmore, Claire Braund and Hilary Day - I feel confident that the CCCM is in good hands and that all of you working closely with Artistic Director Patrick Brennan and the new CCCM Board members will do your utmost to ensure the CCCM goes on providing the highest quality music education, inspires artistry and does all it can to let music continue to flourish on the Central Coast.