

Overtures

November 2007

Major KPO Initiative

KPO Establishes Young Performers' Scholarship Fund to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition

The Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra has launched a Young Performers' Scholarship Fund, to provide funding to extremely talented young NSW musicians.

The funding is intended to enable them to continue their performance studies and/or receive other training that will substantially progress their performance careers to an internationally-acclaimed standard.

The establishment of this fund coincides with and celebrates next year's 25th anniversary of the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition.

The frequency awards are made and the size of each award will depend on funds raised by the KPO. It is hoped that initial awards will be of at least \$10,000, and that one award will be made at least every three years.



KPO President, Louise Keller (left) with Barbara Robinson, one of the KPO players responsible for establishing the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition 25 years ago, at the recent launch of the KPO Young Performers' Scholarship Fund

The fund has received a great kick-start with St Ives Shopping Village making a significant donation,

and giving an in-principle undertaking to substantially increase their support each year for the next two years.

It is hoped to call for nominations for the first award in 2008, with the view to providing funding to the successful nominee in 2009.

Entrants in concerto competitions organised by the KPO since 1984 (now known as the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition) will be eligible to apply for the funding.

The KPO will be seeking further support for this fund from the business community and KPO supporters. If you would like to assist, simply complete and return the enclosed address slip. All donations received by the KPO are fully tax deductible.

KPO is planning a number of other special features to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition. Full details will be outlined in the next issue of *Overtures* – but we can reveal that semi-finalists in next year's competition will each receive special 25th anniversary prizes, including a \$25 gift voucher generously provided by St Ives Shopping Village and a CD provided by Universal Music Australia.

\$10,000 would have been a terrific help!

suggests Emma Sholl, Chair of Associate Principal Flute with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

“What a terrific help a \$10,000 scholarship would have been when I was trying to establish myself as a professional musician.

Music is a wonderful interest that all children should to be able to enjoy. It promotes creativity, discipline and interaction with others, and you have a fabulous time performing it.

However, it is an expensive hobby. I started playing the flute at the age of seven and, by the time I left school, my parents had spent an enormous amount of money on my music lessons, instrument purchase and maintenance, tours with youth orchestras, and entering me in competitions. I was extremely fortunate to have a music scholarship at Roseville College, which eased much of the financial burden. This enabled my parents to buy me a professional flute when I was in Year 10 - at which time I had decided that my life goal was to succeed as a professional flautist. I still remember my friends at school saying, "Emma, they could have bought you a car with that money!" Needless to say, I was much happier going without the car and owning a fantastic instrument. I dreamed at that time I would one day play that flute in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra ...and that dream came true just 5 years later, when I was aged 19.



Emma Sholl

After finishing school, I began a Bachelor of Music, majoring in performance, at Sydney Conservatorium of Music. I saved all my teaching and gig money so I could go overseas to England, Germany and Austria to attend summer schools and have some lessons with renowned flute players. I was lucky enough to be awarded a Big Brother Scholarship, which helped me to do this. However, being a naive 17 year old on my first big trip away from home, I was staggered at how expensive it is to pay for food and board...let alone to fulfil the purpose of my trip, to hear concerts and have lessons.

How an award like the KPO's Young Performers' Scholarship could have helped me then!

We have an incredible standard of classical musicians in this country, and almost 100% of them have spent some time overseas soaking up the culture and honing their skills. This, of course, directly benefits following generations of Australian musicians, as we are able to pass on our acquired knowledge to them in our own country.

Incidentally, performing with the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra as part of the finals of the

Concerto Competition was an incredible experience. I still remember it so vividly. As a junior in Year 10, it was my first performance as soloist with a symphony orchestra and, without a doubt, the musical highlight of my year. I performed the first movement of the Reinecke *Concerto* - and this proved invaluable preparation for me when I performed the whole work with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2001.

The KPO is a remarkable organization, providing some of the best opportunities for development of young musicians in NSW. The launch of the Young Performers' Scholarship Fund is another example of this, and I applaud the KPO for its foresight, enthusiasm, and generosity."



It's more 'adieu' than 'goodbye'

Henryk Pisarek has recently left Australia's golden shores and, sadly, relinquished his role as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra.

Henryk has accepted a university position in conductor training in China and engagements to conduct four professional orchestras in China. These appointments follow an extensive association with numerous Chinese orchestras that commenced in 2001 when he was first invited to conduct the Shanghai Symphony and Hangzhou Symphony Orchestras.

KPO will certainly miss Henryk's valued contributions as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor. As Anne Cahill, KPO's Vice President, reflected "Will Tuesday night rehearsals ever be the same?"

"For almost 12 years, KPO players have enjoyed an enriching journey with Henryk's fine musicianship, precise rehearsal techniques and acute skills in training and nurturing KPO players to quality performances. During the time he has been associated with the KPO, the orchestra has significantly strengthened and developed."

"Henryk's talent and expertise were greatly valued by the musicians, orchestras and students he worked with, and it is unfortunate others did not take full advantage of his skills, which now leave our shores."

KPO is planning to engage Henryk as Guest Conductor where practical over the next few years, and he hopes to return to conduct the 25th anniversary Finals Concert of the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition next year.

Henryk's move to China provides the opportunity for the orchestra to work with a number of new conductors during 2008. A decision will be made mid to late next year on the appointment of a new KPO Artistic Director.

In the meantime, KPO thanks Henryk for his invaluable contribution over the past 12 years in raising the performance standard of KPO and wishes him every success with his forthcoming appointments in China.

Support for the KPO

KPO thanks Ku-ring-gai Council for a grant of \$8,500 to help promote and run the 2008 NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition, to help us organize a Latin American percussion workshop for high school percussionists and to develop activities by the Friends of the KPO that are specifically aimed at younger supporters of the orchestra.

KPO also thanks the Commonwealth Government for providing a \$1,820 Volunteer Small Equipment Grant, enabling the orchestra to purchase a digital camera and a photocopier that will be of enormous value to our music librarians.

And, as mentioned elsewhere, we thank St Ives Shopping Village for providing generous additional prize support to the 2008 NSW Secondary Schools

Concerto Competition and for being the first donor to the KPO Young Performers' Scholarship Fund.



We welcome the latest addition to the orchestra – a new Lyon & Healy concert/orchestral harp. The purchase of this harp is the result of a generous donation by a regular KPO concert-goer and has also enabled the KPO to establish a Harp Mentoring Program to provide young harpists with orchestral experience and practical guidance from expert tutors. Verna Lee is pictured above playing the new harp. She will also be playing it at the KPO Rotary *Vintage Jazz!* concert on December 8th.

Masterpieces...For a Friend

There is usually something especially exciting about pieces that are crafted for a friend...and musical compositions are no different. Our November 17th concert features Saint-Saëns truly spectacular *Violin Concerto No 3*, written for good friend and violin virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate, plus Tchaikovsky's passionate *Symphony No. 4*, dedicated to Nadezhda von Meck, a confidante with whom Tchaikovsky exchanged about 1,100 letters (but never met) and generous patroness. John Peterson's *Woollungah Dances* (the title taken from the aboriginal name of the Wollongong area) features three clarinet soloists and celebrates the composer's childhood in Wollongong with family and friends.

The concert is Saturday 17th November at 8.00pm at Ravenswood Centenary Centre Auditorium, Henry Street, Gordon.

The conductor will be Tobias Foskett and the soloist is violinist Jonathan Mui, the Outstanding Performer at the 2006 NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition.

A free pre-concert talk commences at 7.15pm and will be presented by John Peterson, the composer of *Woollungah Dances*.

KPO PLAYERS:

Manfred Schoen

“My father would have loved me to study the violin. He was a good violinist himself, but never had the opportunity to play in an orchestra. I still remember him conscientiously practicing Paganini etudes on his Widhalm violin, with a carved Beethoven head as scroll, that he bought from a gypsy. I still have that violin today and it is being played by a friend in the Penrith Symphony Orchestra.



Manfred – by his friend, Jon Hawley

My father introduced me to classical music. I decided then that Brahms' *Symphony No. 4* was my favourite symphony.

In high school I got my chance to escape violin study when the resident bassist in the orchestra was about to leave. He gave me free lessons, but later I went to Duisburg Conservatorium and studied under Karl Otto, the leading bassist in the Duisburg SO.

The first piece I performed at school was the *Holberg Suite* by Grieg. Then I joined the local amateur orchestra and played in masses in Church.

After I became a mechanical engineer I worked for two years with Krupp in Rheinhausen, but then accepted an invitation from a former fellow-student to emigrate to Australia. This was intended as a cheap way to have a two year holiday - but I was hooked!

On arrival I took one lesson with Charlie Gray and obtained a practice card at the Sydney Conservatorium. I played in the Con orchestra under Richard Goldner and then the Public School Concert Orchestra under Terence Hunt (Richard Gill played horn and managed the Orchestra). Next I joined the Proscenia Theatre where I played in most of their Gilbert and Sullivan shows. It was a great time!

I even became confident enough to try to join the Elizabethan Trust Orchestra, but I was told nicely that all the places were already taken. So I earned good money by pursuing my other great love - geometry - as a draughtsman. This way I finished up with a good pension and was able to play the bass in my spare time.

I married late. Our son arrived, when I was 42. My wife was a commercial artist and is now an established portrait artist. She paints...my son is an electrical engineer...and I play regularly in 5 orchestras! The Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra is my favourite.

This year I finally got to play - after 50 years - Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*. Two weeks after the KPO performance I played it again with the TOPS Orchestra. So things have gone full circle.

I particularly like the older classics, as my counting in the modern stuff isn't too good. My hope is to have a few more years to enjoy my first love - music - and to meet all the players each week, as that makes me feel part of a big family.”

Val Dart

“My musical journey began at the age of 7 when I found my mother's violin. Growing up in Cambridge (UK), there were plenty of musical opportunities. One highlight was singing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Kings College Chapel.

I joined the Cambridgeshire Holiday Orchestra where my violin teacher, David Bass, charged us a penny each time we played in a rest! We had many great

experiences combining with the Heidelberg Youth Orchestra, playing works like Brahms *4th*. I remember playing the solos in *American in Paris* and being entreated to play louder! (sound familiar?!) and tackling the *Ride of the Valkyries*, the conductor calling out 'Courage All' – we certainly needed it.

I later had the opportunity to play with young musicians from all over the country in the British Youth Symphony Orchestra.

David Bass took me on a quest for the perfect violin – I don't think either of us ever found one! He would bring back violins from London and I'd spend hours trying them! Finally his wife took up violin making!

I decided to be a violinist and after hours of serenading the neighbours at 6am, I got a place at the Royal Manchester College of Music where I studied violin with Yossi Zivoni and later the viola with Cecil Aronowitz, an inspiring musician and teacher.

I took off to Mexico in 1976 – played some recitals – played with the Orquesta de Camera Metropolitana, Mexico City – experienced earthquakes and tropical downpours! Then to Kalgoorlie, Australia to teach



Photo: Gillian Kean

violin, at the invitation of Western Mining! I enjoyed this, but couldn't cope with the heat, and constant violin repairs and wanted to go home!

I joined KPO in 1998, hoping to play viola. The large viola section was already seated. The first violins were late!!! Paul Pokorny asked me to play violin and there I stayed until one day I bought myself a really good violin. That very night Anne Marie Braid rang and asked me to play viola for the next concert!! Since then I have been playing viola.

I discovered that as a viola player if you play the right notes nobody notices, if you are missing you are missed, and if you play the wrong notes you get plenty of attention! I am now a dedicated viola player searching out new solo viola repertoire and going to viola conferences to absorb more of this wonderful instrument!!”

Matt Dempsey

“I am a self confessed Trumpet-dawk, Band-geek, and Orchestra-nerd!

I started playing trumpet in the Hornsby Concert Band (Golden Kangaroos Marching Band) at age 8. This was quite unusual at the time because most young brass players grew up in a Brass Band (as in the Old English type Brass Band like in the movie *Brassed-Off*). The Hornsby Band was a Wind/Concert Band (i.e. Wind & Brass instruments together) like an American High School or College Band. This meant that I never grew up playing a Cornet, and I had to learn to march and play from memory from a very early age.

These days most kids grow up in school-based band programs where the American model is commonplace. While this is sad for brass bands, I think the American Wind Band is a far more flexible and versatile medium through which kids can learn to play an instrument.

My fondest childhood memories centre around the Golden Kangaroos. I lived for Fridays: our teacher, Helen Grieve, would pick up my brother and me from school and take us down to the Band Hall at Beecroft. We would have our trumpet lessons one after the other, and then at 5.00pm it was off to Marching Band practice on the Cheltenham Girls High School field until 7.00pm (in the winter it used to get cold enough that the trumpet mouthpiece would stick to your lips!). Then it was Senior Concert Band rehearsal through to 10.00pm!

I went on to high school at St. Ignatius-Riverview where we had an awesome trumpet/band teacher in Richard Green - former lead trumpet of the Daly Wilson Big Band! It was during this time that I got into Jazz.

While still at school I was doing RSL club gigs and playing in Cabaret type bands all over the place. But I



never really took to Jazz totally. I used to find it a bit of a drag learning all the 'standard' tunes and I found the harmony difficult. Basically I just sucked at it!

When I was 16 I joined the SBS Radio & Television Youth Orchestra, and I started studying with Paul Goodchild (Associate Principal Trumpet of the SSO). Paul was amazing and a really hard task-master. He totally inspired me with his awesome sound, and also kicked my arse into gear too! It was during this time that I started listening to orchestral music a lot and generally heading off down the orchestral trumpet-playing path.

But I never forgot my roots: in late high school I attended several of the camps run by Russell Hammond and The Australian Winds organisation. Australian Winds was dedicated to playing really high quality Wind/Symphonic Band repertoire to a really high standard. It made me appreciate the fact that 'concert band' wasn't just some crappy thing you did when you were growing up. Russell made me realise that Band could sound good ...really, really good!

I went on to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and completed the Diploma of Music (Performance). At the age of just 19 I was lucky enough to start getting casual orchestral work with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and a couple of years later with the Australian Opera & Ballet Orchestra. Some of my greatest musical memories from these years include playing off-stage trumpet in Strauss's "*Alpine Symphony*", 2nd Trumpet (to my teacher Paul) in Tchaikovsky's *5th Symphony*, and on-stage

Trumpet (yep, we had to wear tights and everything!) in Wagner's "*Lohengrin*" in 2001.

For a few years I got pretty heavily into teaching and school band conducting. At one stage I had over 60 students per week and 9 band rehearsals a week! While I don't know that I would ever go back to doing that much of it again, I did come to realise that teaching was a really important thing and that I had a real love of conducting - school band conducting in particular. I am currently Director of Bands and Brass Tutor at Loreto Normanhurst and St. Leo's Catholic College.

These days I am a full-time undergraduate student again, studying hard for the Bachelor of Music (Performance) at Sydney Conservatorium. I would like one day to do a Masters of Music in School Band Conducting in the USA.

I still do a lot of work with the SSO & AOBO. Some recent highlights include playing in Mahler's *6th Symphony* with the SSO, and Puccini's "*Turandot*" with Opera Australia, as well as an unforgettable masterclass with the greatest classical trumpet player in the world Hakan Hardenberger earlier this year.

A few years ago I joined the KPO. I enjoy KPO so much because I like the genuinity of spirit that exists in a community orchestra. Some of the obvious highlights for me have been Mahler's *5th Symphony* and Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*.

So, I am looking forward to many more years of being a Trumpet-geek, a Band-nerd, and firing-up the fabulous Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra!"

Our 2008 Concert Series

An exciting program of music is in store for 2008. We are hoping to release our Concert Calendar at the November 17 '*Masterpieces...for a Friend*' Concert and to mail copies to supporters shortly thereafter. Please note that substantial savings on ticket prices are available if you book your 2008 tickets early.

For Your Diary

Saturday 17th November at 8.00pm
Masterpieces...for a Friend Tickets: 1300 306 776

Saturday 8th December at 8.00pm
Vintage Jazz! – St Ives Rotary benefit concert at PLC Pymble. Tickets: Margaret, 9488 9161

Tuesday 11th December **KPO Players' Dinner**.
Enquiries: Louise, 9868 1508

Visit www.kpo.org.au for further details about
KPO's 2007 and 2008 Concerts

When next updating your Will, please consider including a bequest to assist the KPO. You'll be helping ensure that fine music is provided to future generations – and we can't think of more deserving beneficiaries!