

# Centenary Chronicle Chapter 1\*

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I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land we meet on today, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people and pay my respects to their elders past and present, and also acknowledge, especially in this year of Canberra's 100th anniversary, the tens of thousands of years of culture these people continue to maintain and extend. I extend the acknowledgement to any other First Peoples here today.

I also wish to dedicate this lecture to the memory of bassoonist Lindsay Cooper, who died in London a few years ago. She was a fine musician who bravely decided that she couldn't bear to be tied to a symphonic life, and endless repetitions of Peter and the Wolf, and so turned to improvisation and composition for which she was known widely in Europe. Vale Lindsay

And I will preface this lecture by saying it is the second of some six addresses I give in this second half of the Canberra Centenary year, and I am using each of them to focus on different parts of the Centenary program. Together, these will act as a kind of chronicle of the year – and this, appropriately for today's audience, is about the music that's been heard, and is still to be heard in Canberra in 2013, the year in which we celebrate the naming on March 12, 1913, of a new national capital for a newly federated nation.

When Walter Burley Griffin won the international design competition for the new capital, and his partner, the architect Marion Mahony Griffin worked on it with him, her renderings of his design being crucial to the win, there was no question that they dreamed of the new capital as not only a centre of federal

government, but as a centre for all kinds of national achievement, including the arts.

Many insinuate that, along with other parts of the plan which were never fulfilled, this ambition for a centre of arts and culture also failed. I beg to differ. While Canberra now has 370,000 inhabitants, with around 600,000 in total accessing the hospitals, indicating that that many could also access the arts and culture the capital offers, it will not compete in actual numbers of artists and artistic output with cities of five or four million; but this doesn't mean there's no activity here, which is the myth which many outsiders continue to spread. 'National Treasure' Clive Palmer, in his first comments about the National Capital, to which he has been summoned by his electorate as their representative, declared he would not be spending much time in Canberra (that will be very interesting for those who elected him). He happily called it "a sterile place" and this falsehood went without comment in the mass media. It's the woeful ignorance of statements like these that continue, with absolutely no basis in fact or recent experience, to portray our capital in negative terms. In Mr Palmer's case, it may be his lack of knowledge about the lack theme parks (even though we do have dinosaurs out at Gold Creek, and seriously good live animals at the National Australia Zoo) that forms the basis of the opinion: I'm guessing he's rarely stepped into any of the 11 national collecting institutions which the capital hosts – each of them with more themes, content and stimulation than a 1000 theme parks put together.

In any case, artistic activity has been greater this year than at any other time in the one hundred year history of this city, and we can now couple that with statistical evidence of the significant rise in visitors to the capital this year. Given that I made an early decision that this activity would be created mainly by local as well as Australian artists, there have been unprecedented opportunities for local artists to make work, and, in the instance of music, to have their works heard. I'm sure, once you've heard about some of what we've been doing, and continue to do, you may think differently of Canberra – and that's what one of chief goals has been, for Australians (including Canberrans as well) to re-imagine their capital.

It's also true that one of the components of thinking again about this place, is not only the output of local artists who have taken advantage of these opportunities, but the ability of the city to host guest artists in all genres. Along the way, I'll also be saying something about those who have visited, and offered their music to us this year, and also something about the wide and narrower educational perspectives on all of this.

That music should be core to the Centenary program is not surprising – my life has been filled with music since I was very young. My father was a singer, and I gave my first public performances at four years old. You may also be aware that I have had no formal musical education at any point in my career. I can't tell even now whether it's just that I simply have no patience for detail. I went to a local piano teacher for a few lessons, but we didn't have a piano, and I couldn't stand it. Maybe it was just the dry old bird giving the lessons.

My Dad bought me a plastic ukelele when I was eight, along with a three minute 'learn to play the ukelele' manual. Under his guidance I managed a few tunes such as *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean* and *Santa Lucia*, but because the strings hurt my fingers, I gave up. A few years later, puberty and hormones made me

understand that singing and playing drew a schoolyard crowd – especially if I sang *Jailhouse Rock* – and my great grandfather soon bought me a cheap guitar. I just transferred the uke chords to guitar. Sponsored by Allan's Music I got a better guitar and had a guitar teacher for a while – but I had no patience for that either, especially as I was by now singing on TV and doing just fine. At high school I was streamed into the top science class and was forbidden to do 'art' – a shame, as I had already discovered the cubists and was doing thick watercolour (in imitation of oil) miniatures copied from Braque, Picasso and Gris. There was no music education at my high school. I started the Enfield High Music Club – which was Wednesday lunchtimes – me singing and playing guitar. I can now more or less find my way round the vocal line on a score, but can't sight read by any means: I've performed Brecht, Weill, Eisler, Schoenberg and Satie, learning by ear: and not just performed the works of these composers in the bathroom – but in The Sydney Opera House, The Royal National Theatre (London), The Holywell Music Room (Oxford), L'Odeon (Paris), The Hebbel (Berlin), the Carre (Amsterdam), BAM in Brooklyn, The Adelaide Festival Centre, Hamer Hall in Melbourne, and performance venues from Rangoon to Nova Scotia, Groote Eylandt to Ljubljana, Bogota to Changmai.

This is just to say that I as much as I now see that formal training would have been beneficial (though I'm grateful I *didn't* have a voice teacher spending years to smooth over the break between chest and headvoice – meaning I would never have been able to yodel), I have been able to have a musical life and career *without* formal training, and have many sympathies for the various ways in which people come to making music – in community choirs, in rock bands, on TV competitions (which were significant in my case), in systems like El Sistema in Venezuela, the guitar project in northern Mexico and my recent discovery, the music education systems in São Paulo. At the same time I have intense admiration

for learned virtuosi – and there is virtually no music I don't enjoy – though I confess that thrash and heavy metal usually mean early exits (and that's not entirely an aesthetic criticism, just an innate desire to protect the so beloved capacity for hearing).

So, no surprise, that the cultural program for the Centenary of Canberra celebrations has produced and continues to be a smorgasboard of musical experience, and reflects not only my own all-embracing musical taste, but also the wide tastes of the Canberra community. One of the strengths of a community like this, long used to missing out on many of the big acts that pass so close by in Sydney, is the tendency to make their own music. This is not dissimilar to Tasmania, where community choirs and community musical theatre companies also abound. And in both places, there's a rarely articulated tension between admiring the self-motivated part-timers, but at the same time preserving a sense of the dedication, commitment and skill demanded of those who devote their lives and careers to the arts.

Linked to this is the obvious fact that we are in an age when everyone has an opinion. When did they not? But now everyone can publish their opinion, and we are faced with serious questions about the role of expert commentary. Is it now all just a popularity contest – music, dance, theatre, writing, political leaders, scientists, philosophers? Is the opinion of a group of air controllers (who may never have heard a symphony before, and almost certainly not a new Australian symphony, yet felt as if they could express their opinion about the new symphony) as valid as that of the experienced music reviewer? Is all that matters whether one likes it or not. If so, then where is the motivation for excellence and originality – neither are automatically popular. In fact almost the opposite is the case. Familiarity breeds popularity, it seems. Why would musicians not give up striving for originality, and just try to be popular and make a heap of cash?

It also raises the question of how and where you place highly skilled, ambitious, professional music, and where amateur participation fits in. I had hatched one plan for the perfect fit, but alas (in that legion of things one strove to bring off, and didn't) we couldn't find the additional \$200,000 it would have cost to have Opera Australia, in concert, performing *Il Trovatore* with a choir as large as we liked – can you imagine the Anvil Chorus with a 1000 Canberrans singing along? But one of the challenges this year has been to have an eye to quality professional music experiences, across the widest possible range of tastes and genres, but at the same time to offer platforms for part-time music-makers to make their proud contributions.

One of these was the March 11 Big Birthday celebration, the key goal of which was participation. Geoff Cobham had recently used his Churchill Fellowship to research major event experience across Europe. His conclusion was that the pleasure factor diminished the further away from the front row you were, and we agreed that we would try to make the Centenary's signature event different from the norm of 'put your blanket down five hours earlier, sit there and wait, then receive the musical entertainment fairly passively'. We aimed for big effects along with many smaller intimate participatory experiences along the way. Given the Canberra community's passion for, and wide tastes in music, music was key.

The peak moment was the world premiere of Andrew Schultz' *Symphony No 3: Century*. Let me talk first about the symphony itself, then what else was on offer on 11 March as a good start for a look at the music program across the year.

For a start – why a symphony? Why a choral symphony? Despite all the misgivings we might have about the cost of orchestras, or arguments about audiences (which are in fact on the rise in many places), is there still anything else that offers the same sense of occasion as that huge amalgam of instruments plus a big bunch of voices. Artistic Director of the Canberra

Symphony Orchestra, Nicholas Milton, and I discussed choice of composer for months. I needed someone who would not turn their back on a big finish – someone game enough to have the new work premiered outdoors to a massive crowd. I listened to a huge range of Australian composition – and in the end alighted on Andrew Schultz, on the strength of his former choral works, in particular *Horseshoe Bend*. This work seemed to me to grasp narrative in a natural and unforced way. The first conversations with the composer were excellent – Andrew was up for it.

It's worth raising here the very question of public art in general. We should always be mindful that any time art escapes the sacred sites of Art (a gallery, a theatre, a concert or recital hall), any time any artist is brave enough to have their work exposed to an audience not necessarily devoted to art and its aims, the work of art *and* artist can come up against potential criticism precisely of that kind which is not backed by experience or knowledge, and only on whether someone 'liked it or not'.

Because so much of the Centenary celebration program has been free to the public, and out in the open, there were any number of instances of this kind of bravery by artists, and other professionals, prepared to expose their work to audiences way beyond devotees, possibly even to those hostile to the idea of art. The most visible example was Patricia Piccinni's *Skywhale*, which had to run the predictable gauntlet of mass media mischief, public funding outrage, violent opinion from many who had never seen the work, and 'what's it got to do with Canberra?' until this marvellous work established itself as a huge favourite of people all over Australia and the world, and almost as a symbol of Canberra's bold, adventurous aspect. There have been almost a dozen fabulous Pope cartoons which have firmly set *Skywhale's* status as a symbol of the national capital. Its flights have extended to Hobart's *Dark Mofo*, the *Eden Whale Watching Festival*, and Government House in the national capital. Last

Friday night she could be seen, glowing in all her massive glory, at the edge of Lake Burley Griffin.

Composer Andrew Schultz was another of these artists brave enough to take on a very public commission. Fearless in the face of a world premiere outdoors, in front of a 150,000 strong audience, this composer knew he had to deliver something to please that audience on the occasion, but also maintain his own artistic integrity and ensure, as Patricia did, that this would be the next serious step in their artistic output. That his new work could also embrace two of the many great choirs in the region was also a plus, and that had been part of my desire for the inclusion of choral elements: in the end these were performed by the Oriana Chorale, and the Woden Valley Youth Choir.

Mainly, Andrew liked the theme – a celebration of the capital. He liked our discussions about democracy and the ideals and ambitions on which Canberra was built – the optimism of the Griffins and the new hope of a young nation (albeit on the back of a very old one). Walter Burley Griffin had written to King O'Malley (then Minister for Home Affairs):

*I had entered this Australian event to be my first and last competition, solely because I have for many years greatly admired the bold and radical steps in politics and economies which your country has dared to take, and which must, for a long time set ideals for Europe and America ahead of their possibility of accomplishment.*

Taking this idealism to heart, as Andrew progressed with the work over two years, he was the model composer, and sent us updates as his research continued.

The first big thrill came when he sent me the texts for *Three Architects*. Andrew had decided for a couple of reasons to write three separate works for unaccompanied voice – as choral preludes to each of the movements of the symphony. The reasons were partly practical: there would be little time to rehearse, and while the choirs could rehearse separately, there would be few

rehearsals for combined voice and orchestra. This way, quality might be assured. Secondly, while *Three Architects*, with texts from Burnham and Sullivan (the Griffin's sources of inspiration) and Griffin himself, is specifically about Canberra, the symphony could be played separately in the future without being always regarded only as an occasional or commemorative work. He called it *Symphony Number 3: Century*, also with a view to longevity, and also released *Three Architects* to future performances for choir alone.

His choice of texts gave me great hope for the final work:

BURNHAM – is sung by a children's choir:

*Make no little plans,  
They have no magic.  
Make big plans – aim high,  
In hope and work.  
A noble plan, a diagram,  
Once drawn is made.  
A noble, logical diagram  
Once recorded, will never die.  
But will be, when we are dead,  
A living thing,  
It will insist:  
Let your watchword be order  
And your beacon beauty.*

SULLIVAN is sung by an adult choir to the children's choir:

*Do you, or do you not, intend to be architects in  
whose care  
Democracy may entrust its dreams and  
aspirations?  
I warn you the time left for an answer is acutely  
brief.  
For as young as you are, you are not as young as  
you were  
Yesterday  
And tomorrow?  
Tomorrow!*

GRIFFIN is sung by the combined choirs:

*Unity is essential to the city-  
So complex a problem requires a simple  
organism.  
Purity in proportion, and unity in scale.  
Eliminate the useless,  
Eliminate what serves no role.  
A general simplicity,  
A maximum of repetition,  
A maximum of rhythm.  
Honest direct solutions.  
A civilization of aspiring ideals,  
So limitless,  
Greater than any on earth.  
Number, size, scale, elevation.*

The symphony was a great success. Alas, the shocking absence of mainstream critical analysis in Canberra means that not enough has been written about this work (or many others from the vast cultural program) to date. The only attention paid to it by *The Canberra Times* early the following week was a mention of Nicholas Milton's urgent schedule, which required him to drive to Sydney immediately after the performance. A review appeared days later, and we learned subsequently that the reviewer had in fact not attended the world premiere, but had downloaded the recording from the ABC and reviewed on that basis – though this was not mentioned in the review. *Resonate*, the online magazine's essay is the best to date and reads in part :

*In reference to the philosophies of the architects, the composer has tried to take one idea, one sound, and let everything fold out from this one idea. The movement is also a little nationalistic, it tries to capture the clean, sometimes sharp sounds of the Australian vocal accent. This is achieved by using the bright solo timbres of the solo woodwind instruments in highly personal writing.*

*Both works commemorate the Centenary of Canberra by exploring the original ideas behind the designing of the city. However, the optimism of the three architects should not only be celebrated as something of the past but should be embraced as a guide for the future. So too, the symphony, with its personal look at the artistic process, shows that persistence and integrity are needed in most ventures. It is these pertinent ideas that will, hopefully, help Schultz's Three Architects, and Symphony No. 3 - Century, become part of Australia's canon of artistic enterprise.*

Let me restate my belief that the health of any cultural landscape requires the stability of the three-legged stool of artist, audience, and the critical dialogue which surrounds that exchange – if any one of those legs is weak, the whole environment is vulnerable. It is one of the crucial challenges that Canberra's cultural future faces, and it is terrific to see the establishment of The Childers Group (to lobby for the arts) and hear Gorman House proposing a new online magazine devoted precisely to encouraging this dialogue. In the face of the failure of Canberra's mainstream media to cover the arts in the detail, and with the expertise they demand, I am strongly advocating support for this initiative.

Nevertheless, despite these failures to maintain and advance critical dialogue, and the challenges of a new cultural democracy (we can vote on anything and the largest number of votes determines 'the winner'), the impulse for artistic excellence is still alive – and evident in many of our composers. Andrew is one of many nationwide. Locally, there was also Vincent Plush whose *Secret Geometries*, a terrific new work specifically inspired by the Griffin design (very different from both *CENTURY*, and from Jonathan Mills' earlier work *The Ethereal Eye*, also based on Griffin geometry and played by the composer and Synergy in the 2012 Canberra International Music Festival), *Secret Geometries* was also premiered by the CSO here this year, as was local composer Michael Sollis' soundtrack for Jyll Bradley's sound

recordings *City of Trees*. The producer of these recordings (which can be downloaded from the C100 website) Jonquil Panting, this year won the UK's Sony Award for radio (a radio equivalent to the Emmys). These composers strive for excellence on their own terms and on the basis of their own artistic integrity – it's not about a popularity contest.

Nor is this to be confused with accessibility. Excellence and accessibility are not mutually exclusive, and we have to resist the impulse to self-censor intellect, and dumb down, in the interests of making work widely available. The Education Resource (one of a number of very impressive Centenary Education kits, including *City of Trees*, and *Bringing art to the Community*) produced to go with *Symphony No 3: Century*, is a model of intelligence, rigour, and accessibility for music students. In addition, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra's own education program *Noteworthy* used the symphony as the basis of young musicians' practical work this year. There has already been one concert, which Andrew attended, and that student orchestra version of part of the symphony will be played again in a few weeks at the *Children's Festival* October 25.

But let me move on to what else 11 March offered, and I'm sticking to this one day for a moment, just because it provides a snapshot of the inclusive nature of the centenary program as a reflection of this city's musical landscape. The symphony forestage was programmed from mid-afternoon by Michael Sollis. I have nothing but admiration for this young local musician/composer. This year, in addition to curating a season of new music for his Griffin Ensemble, which specialises in unique and original site specific performances (this year including the Lake, The Earth, Mt Stromlo and an air hangar), Michael made possible the inaugural collaboration with Swedish musician/composers as the first step in ongoing international new music exchanges with Canberra, and facilitated the Canberra leg of the *Musica Viva*

program, which this year gave us, amongst many memorable recitals, the astonishing final performances of the Tokyo String Quartet.

On March 11, Michael brought to the symphony stage a variety of Canberra-related music - by two community choirs, including the Gay and Lesbian Qwire celebrating an important anniversary, a performance of the *Canberra Cantata*, a performance by *The Mandolin Orchestra* (including amongst its members the wife of the Swedish Ambassador) and the Griffyn Ensemble playing Sissask's beautiful *Southern Sky*, inspired by Mount Stromlo and eerily connected to the bushfires which burnt out the site 10 years ago. It's worth mentioning here that there have been a number of artistic endeavours that drew on the 2001 firestorm for core content. Most recently composer Sandra France's *From A Black Sky* premiered at the Street Theatre as part of *Made in Canberra*, the Centenary-supported series which, as its name indicates, is a program which nurtures new work by and for Canberrans. The national capital doesn't get a lot of opera - Oz Opera drops in from time to time, and Opera by Candlelight has two very popular nights of bon-bons per year. The latter is endearing for its location in The Albert Hall, and the 'ladies bring a plate' catering and seating. But this absence is the reason the Canberra Choral Society's operatic offerings are so valuable, and why contemporary opera is even rarer.

The symphony stage program, earlier in the afternoon, linked directly to some of the content of CENTURY which followed. For those who wanted their dose of so-called contemporary classical music, this was the place they eventually gathered after meandering the vast highly activated sites all around Lake Burley Griffin.

This stage cannoned act for act with the stage at Reconciliation Mound, within sight of the symphony stage. Its program was put together by the Mildura-based Indigenous Cultural Program producer, HHO Events. The program began with a smoking ceremony conducted by local Duncan

Smith and the Wuradjeri Echoes. Both Duncan and his son are terrific singers in language, another son is a great didj player; and Duncan is currently working on an extension of his family's song and dance - a small-scale theatre show, *Biami*, which we have commissioned for the Children's Festival. We hope this fulfilment of Duncan's desire to take their performance a step further will be one of the many legacies of the centenary year.

Reconciliation mound also saw an excerpt from *Morning Star* by local company Mirramu led by Elizabeth Cameron Dalman, and Albert David, with guests from Arnhem Land- including the great singer and dancer Jdakkapurra Munyarun. Local Indigenous singer songwriters also performed, and that stage's program concluded with a splendid cultural cross-fusion band - with lots of big vocals, brass and glitter.

Even earlier in the afternoon - the big word COUNTRY was ceremonially raised, letter by letter, as virtuoso William Barton worked his magic on didj and was joined by soprano and kids' chorus. Soon after, led by the joyous custom-made-bicycle Ratpack, and hordes following the music around the edge of the lake, was the *Hall Marching Band* - all in red, they gave spirited brass, wind and percussion repertoire. Composer and percussionist Graeme Leak conducted the massed spectacle, and once the word was so beautifully and soulfully raised, Graeme led his NOISE Orchestra off around the lake. These guys played and banged everything - *including* the kitchen sink. Workshops had been conducted during the morning.

The NOISE Orchestra passed alongside the HOME project, where culturally diverse communities of Canberra, more than one thousand participants, had constructed home environments, and the word HOME in their language -like CASA and DOM, while there was a literal platform for song and dance from their various homelands.

The NOISE Orchestra marched on to the Regatta Point stage which had kicked off at midday with performances by the Band of the Royal Military College Duntroon. Now that stage began its program with re-formed Canberra bands who played to huge appreciative crowds – The Gadflies, the Falling Joys, the church – MCd by ex- Canberran Paul McDermott (whose artworks have recently been exhibited at M16 gallery). Interestingly, many of our VIPs on the day opted to perch at this stage. Later, I'm told, these bands went on to jam late at the Spiegelgarten (brought to Canberra for the first time by David Bates and family - David had met his wife in Canberra when they both attended The School of Art here – he had known a number of the performers reuniting on this day) while the Regatta Point stage was taken over, post-symphony, by Canberra's Indie bands again playing to a changing but still huge audience. This stage was a reminder, all day, of the contemporary musical talent that Canberra has been producing for decades.

And the site of this stage was the first, from midday, to enjoy Graeme Leak's flotilla of musical boats – vintage watercraft sporting all kinds of music which floated past the perambulatory lakeside audiences –percussion groups, a high school wind band, accordions, a soprano etc. The musical genres turned to local jazz in the afternoon and floated southside to entertain the thousands at the *Longest Bubbly Bars in the World*. This very much reflected the ethos of the event as a whole – wherever you were, there would be something to respond to and to enjoy.

And over at Aspen Island, the National Folk Festival had programmed an afternoon of authentic and beautiful acoustic sets played by folk virtuosos such as Battlers Ballard and Triantan. This programming reminded us of the National Folk Festival itself, and its impressive achievements under the direction of Sebastian Flynn.

So... all in twelve hours, and you see what I mean by a smorgasbord. *This is the music we heard in just twelve hours of 12 months of a myriad number of other musics.*

Aspen Island, for instance, was also the setting some months later for local duo *Shortis and Simpson's ONE RIVER* project for which John Shortis had not only written new material for local choristers, but also researched old songs written about the River Murray. He discovered some beauties and resurrected them for performance on this and subsequent ONE RIVER occasions. My favourite is *The Darling is the Darling of My Heart*. ONE RIVER (search online and you'll find the website, to be archived for at least five years by the National Library of Australia) has been a very active project linking communities the length and breadth of the Murray Darling Basin. It has provided an arena for river-life conversations which go deeper than just the divisiveness over water allocation.

This evening out at Uriarra Crossing, another river event occurs. Aboriginal people of the Narranjerri, led by Elder Major Sumner (Uncle Moogy), from the Murray mouth around Goolwa, will share songs and dance with Ngambri dancers and songmen from the Murrumbidgee area within the ACT. It is thought that such exchange happened around 150 years ago, when the river was networked length and breadth through songlines and knowledge exchange. I saw a version of this event last week, and with the sound of a rushing pure-water Murrumbidgee ever present, it was a moving occasion and a highly significant indicator of the unity and collaboration which is to come.

Earlier in the year, Shortis and Simpson had also deployed community choirs for *Prime Time*, for which John had written two songs for every Australian Prime Minister – so the addition to the cannon throughout the year has been wide and deep. Moya Simpson was also part of the development and performance team for Urban



Theatre Project's *Catalogue of Dreams*, recently reviewed in *Real Time* online in the following way:

*Catalogue of Dreams is a collaboration between seasoned theatre practitioners, newcomers, Indigenous and non-indigenous people and some on the 'inside' of the welfare system. It reaches no conclusions—about the inadequacies of the welfare system, of people, of parents, or of life itself—but opens a window wide enough for us to feel the breeze of lives surviving disarray, and wonder at what can be done....*

*...The strongest parts of this work are not in direct verbal exchange: they are in the soft voices, attempts at kindness, options offered, spaciousness, don't push too hard; and where the adult actor Jeremy Broom—perhaps the boy when he grows up, pretending a coherent ascendancy—dons a messy, orange-gold cloak and cardboard crown and sings Coldplay's Viva la Vida as if his companions, as if the world, cannot contain him. His voice charges the room; the other performers give space for his illusion to unfold, spend its time, and be done.*

Indeed it was that moment when this unexpectedly rich voice rose up in the small theatre with 'when I ruled the world', that I recalled Diva Dan from 1980s London. In a Bloopips cabaret in London, I saw Dan, a deaf drag queen, singing and tap dancing to a song entitled 'Let's Scream our Tits Off'. The singing was gloriously and unforgettably abandoned – and made me know truly that anyone can sing. Raucous and off-key, it sang the spirit of life itself, and was about as untutored and free as I've ever heard any voice.

It means that music is indeed open to anyone, and as much as I strive in every performance I give to get close and closer to a higher percentage of 'true' – a good night still being about 75%, and so admire the excellence I am privileged to experience – The Tokyo Quartet this year, John Adams conducting his own *Shaker Loops* at the Cite de la Musique some years ago in Paris, William Christie and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with Dawn Upshaw, in *Theodora* directed by Peter Sellers at Glyndebourne even

longer ago – I still know that music can be transformative for everyone. And I suppose my hope is that educators can pick up on this year's activity – do as *Noteworthy* did, and use the new and locally produced material and research in ways that introduce it to students and audiences.

I myself was delighted a few years back, at the start of my role here, to re-introduce to the public Jack Lumsdaine's beautiful *Canberra's Calling to You* which had been sent to me by Vincent Plush. It would be easy to burlesque this cheesy old number, but I don't. And when I give it a straight rendition, it works in a respectful way. This has subsequently been sung by me many times – and I'll repeat it at *Voices in the Forest* on November 23 – but it's also been picked up by school choirs, and the Canberra City Band, and has been the subject of a mash-up competition run by the National Film and Sound Archive.

The local group The Cashews responded to our project *Portrait of a Nation* in which we invited local residents to research the person their street or suburb is named after: The Cashews wrote *Green Light* – a terrific song about Charles Weston. The Cashews have also been doing guerrilla gigs all over Canberra all year in a program called Canberra Gold, in which they respond to requests for gigs in particular areas. I attended the first in Glebe Park in the beginning of the year and a beautiful crowd of young families, babies, and dogs flocked around the little rotunda. They welcomed me, and just hinted that they had bought a ukelele for the purpose. I repeated the song I had sung that week for the Canberra Centenarians – those residents who turned one hundred or were already one hundred this year. The song was *Young at Heart*. A couple of months later I was singing to the babies who had been born on March 12 2013 – 20 plus of them – and I sang *All the Pretty Little Horses*, and Brahms' Lullaby with the German words, accompanied on my own beautiful ukelele, purchased in Honolulu when I was gigging there a few years ago.

On November 23rd, for *Voices in the Forest*, programmed by Chris Latham for the remarkable new *National Arboretum Canberra*, I will open the show with a little set of the songs I have sung here in Canberra over the last four years – it includes those mentioned above, but also a little French, a little German, the great *Hard Times Come Again No More*, which Joan Baez included in her program here this year, and will conclude with the perfect love song for a departing Creative Director – *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow*.

Just a couple of weeks prior to that I'll be delivering a short set from *South Pacific* – I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair/ There Is Nothing Like a Dame and Some Enchanted Evening, all from *South Pacific* – this is for the musical theatre tribute evening at Woden Tradies as part of Springout – Canberra's Gay and lesbian festival – the event is called Gaydelweiss!

So... whoever says that Canberra is humorless needs to get their head read. And anyone who imagines Canberra without music just doesn't know what this place really is.

Another duo wrote another theme for the national capital – *Smack Bang in the Middle* – and I heard that sung by a community choir at the Canberra Gold and Citizen of the Year ceremony.

And we can't forget *The Musical Offering* which has been produced through Pro Musica and a heap of volunteers, both organisers and performers, to offer one free musical performance somewhere in Canberra every day of this year. It's an extraordinary gift, the brainchild of Don Aitken, and the 300th performance will be given on Sunday October 27th at the High Court and the National Portrait Gallery.

I'm planning to join the line-up, possibly with a rendition of another ditty I've had the privilege of bringing to life, maybe for the first time. It was written by Marion Mahony Griffin, all about partner Walter's adventures in Canberra – and to the tune of *A Frog he Would a Wooing Go*. It was given to me by journalist Ian Warden.

I may pair this, as it will be in the Portrait Gallery, with another song which will forever now be indelibly associated for me with Walter. Prevalled upon by Dave Heaton to sing a hymn at Walter's grave in Lucknow, I chose *Abide With Me*. Though raised in the High Church of England tradition, I'm no Christian, and had to think very carefully about this. But I have a wonderful album called *Whispering Hope*, which is a compilation of hymns sung by that Broadway and Hollywood musical hero, the golden-voiced Gordon Macrae, and the incomparable Jo Stafford, and arranged by Stafford's husband Paul Weston (a devout Catholic as I have recently learned). There I learned to love *Abide with Me* more for the non-specifically Christian sentiments which I latterly relate to Walter (When other helpers fail, and comforts flee; Help of the Helpless, Oh Abide with me. When all around, decay and change I see; Oh Thou who changest not, Abide with me)

As the heavens did not crash down upon this sinner, in the Christian Burial Ground in Lucknow when I sang it, I have taken the odd opportunity to repeat the performance on occasion, as I will on the 27th. Indeed the hymn is now forever enshrined for me in this moment –when we made a libation on the grave (from a vessel by local Canberran artist Jennifer Kemmarre Martinelli who went on to win the overall Award at the Telstra Indigenous art awards this year). When, as the benediction was being intoned, the call to prayer rang out round the city – an aural symbol of all that Lucknow is – Muslim, Hindu, Christian – and where Walter had lay in an unmarked grave from 1937 until the 80s when Canberra journalist Graeme Westlake persisted until he found it.

As an aside of sorts, Marion's remains also lay unmarked at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago from her death in 1961 until the 90s when a plaque was erected.

At the Portrait Gallery I will join another marvellous musical force in the counter-tenor Tobias Cole. This year Tobias has led the Canberra Choral Society in some splendid concerts such

as a revisiting of historic vocal performances in the Albert Hall, and the lengthily entitled 'Best Choral Music Ever written by an Australian with a Canberra Connection'. Tobias not only produced, but also performed in, Handel's *Theodora* in concert. But perhaps most importantly, Tobias introduced in February this year *New Voices*, a youth choir created expressly to care for the future of vocal music in Canberra, and affiliated with the Canberra Choral Society – another legacy of this Centenary year.

While it's difficult to predict what effect the dramatic changes at the Canberra School of Music will ultimately have on Canberra's musical landscape, its staff and students having been central to the energy of this scene for decades, there's no doubting the continuing commitments of people like Tobias, and indeed Peter Tregear, now head of the School of music and a regular contributing performer in the local scene, to securing and promoting the riches of music in the capital. To Tobias and his efforts, add Chris Latham who has produced four terrific Canberra International Music Festivals while I've been here- and will direct one last chapter in 2014.

This year the festival saw premiere performances of the works of Adams and Sculthorpe, and an unforgettable concert of music by Gavin Bryars, with the composer himself playing, conducting and, believe it or not, filling in with a bit of stand-up comedy to fill a momentary glitch. The live rendition of *Jesus' Blood* was a revelation, and especially, I'm sure, for the combined children's choir that sang it. Equally revelatory was the festival's intimate performance at the former US Ambassador's residence: Jeffrey Bleich had known Paul Dresher since he was a kid, and the performance of his music in this setting, with Lisa Moore on fire at the piano, made a superb impression.

Throughout the festival we were aware of the energies and musicianship of Roland Peelman, best known for his deft directorship of The Song Company, but becoming a regular workhorse

for the multiple performances in the music festival. In a clever process of continuo, Roland has now been announced as Artistic Director of the Canberra International Music Festival from 2015 onwards. And quality recitals continue at the Wesley Uniting Church – this year including a terrific demonstration of contemporary Chinese music. *Salut Baroque* gave us two excellent concerts of music from that period. There's more, including Artsong Canberra, but you get the picture.

Music of course surfaced, as it always does, in other genres – a splendidly effective score by ex-Canberran Huey Benjamin for Garry Stewart's *MONUMENT*, the ballet in tribute to Parliament House's 25 anniversary this year; Ian Grandage's Helpmann Award-winning musical direction of *The Secret River* (which we co-commissioned). Ian also received his Sidney Myer Award here in Canberra in a ceremony held in the Spiegelgarden in March: his acceptance speech touched us all when he said he would use the money to purchase his very first piano. The National Film and Sound Archive commissioned a new song from the *Stiff Gins*, as soundtrack for the newly restored Raymond Longford footage of Canberra's Foundation Stones ceremonies of 100 years ago, and the talents of Canberra newcomer, pianist Elaine Lobenstein started to emerge not only in live improvised playing to film, but in concerts and recitals throughout the capital.

In other genres, even more opportunities were created for locals through

*Gigs Go Local* – a match-making service for venues encouraged to book local acts rather than import from other capitals. This has also resulted in *Sundays in the Park*, which started a week and a bit ago – a Sunday afternoon series of local music at Gorman House. *The Canberra Musicians Collective* has also found a stable home, and the hope is that the energy of 2013 will continue to whet the appetite for local music in the capital.

The Centenary also supported the second edition of *Capital Jazz* at the Street Theatre – a

week of exhilarating contemporary jazz from local, national and international music-makers. Again, a matter of continuing legacy. And coming up is one of the last music events - *Smells like Centenary Spirit*. This is the culmination of the desire of our youth advisory group to have a Battle of the Bands style competition whose heats would be held locally, and the finals centrally, so all could see the best in town. The finalists will share the stage with a nationally rated band.

And so... a couple of personal reflections. While still enjoying planned concerts, as is evidenced here, I find more myself more and more loving art when I simply encounter it, accidentally, as part and parcel of the rest of life. Perhaps it's because of an over-busy life, but setting time aside in advance, booking, even single performances much less subscriptions, is less and less attractive, and in that I share some of the habits of younger generations who have multiple options on any given day or night, and like to freewheel in their choices. Composers and musicians should demand and command a living wage, yet I love discovering music and other arts accidentally and, even as one who can afford the price of a ticket, love the works even more when they are unencumbered by time and price and certain behaviours (again, this is from one who glares with purpose at anyone coughing or rustling during a performance).

Happening upon a notice in the doorway of Ely cathedral during an outing from Cambridge a few years ago, the spontaneous overstay in Ely and a drink in the quaint beer-garden allowed us to hear a luscious performance of the Rachmaninoff Vespers, unanticipated and free of charge. How do we make this more and more possible, yet still ensure that those who create the content- the musicians and composers - are able to continue their creative lives, and feed themselves and their families at the same time? Recorded music of all kinds does come freely to the ears of vast audiences - via radio and a plethora of electronic/digital means. We know that the creators are

rarely compensated for the content they provide, even though the music industry has done well to ensure some return.

Mostly, performers are paid something for live performance free to the public, but are the very best composers and musicians deployed in such free events? There is still, surely, a price point barrier at which the very best are in some senses judged according to the magnitude of their ticket price: this is true for rock, pop, and classical stars alike. The rule of thumb is that fans should pay what they can afford to pay, and everyone else gets the recorded version, and perhaps once or twice a year, some version of live performance (usually with a somewhat moderated repertoire) in that genre, afforded by the city, the festival, via additional corporate sponsorship. There are clear stratifications amongst those who love to experience what composers and musicians do - the more you can afford to pay, the closer you get to live performance in venues where the music sounds best. It costs to get closer to the source, and to the real sound.

And the corollary is, that the very best is less likely to be encountered accidentally, and free. The joy of the very best in almost any genre is most likely to be encumbered by the traditional processes of booking in advance, paying, and being there on time.

It's why we countered some of those expectations by presenting Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunipingu live and free in Civic Square this year; you could simply encounter one of the most beautiful voices in this continent, by strolling to Civic Square (as thousands did) and stopping to listen. It is also why everything on March 11 this year was free to the public, why *Pro Musica* has been so active in presenting Canberra's best for free, every day this year.

Not being familiar with the many and varied degrees of musical education that currently exist, I'm not sure if any of this is discussed and debated. Remembering that the Viennese composer Hanns Eisler consciously abandoned

the concert stage to make music for and with workers, and observing here this year, how many musicians are happy to work with communities in making their music, there's a strong tradition of talented and skilled music-makers who choose paths alternative to the obvious quest for ever-wider public recognition and reward; and of course, there are those who do both.

One would never wish to dent the passion and ambition of young musicians – and one would also long to ensure that music-making is part of every young person's education, in the same way as every young person is deemed to have a more rounded school experience if there's a dose of sport in their weekly routine. But do we also add into their joy of making music, just at the moment when some of them will consider music as a profession, the very many directions in which they can take their skills? And this, of course, has other parallels.

The proliferation of schemes for using music education as a means of social harmony and equity in South and Central America is obvious. El Sistema, for instance, beginning in Venezuela, has had a profound influence. At the world Summit on Arts and Culture, which I curated two years ago for Melbourne (and will be held next January in Santiago), we met the woman leading the music project in Juarez, a violent border town in northern Mexico. The aim of the project was to put a guitar in every child's hand. On the day of their first big concert, their greatest pride was that on that day, nobody was killed. Such stories are very likely to kindle a very different kind of passion amongst those current music-students who share with many of their generation a natural interest in, and have energy for, volunteering and being part of aid programs. This is not to say that some of those students will not also attain to prestigious music stages. Nor is it to suggest that such musical intervention only happens in developing countries.

One of my first encounters with Indigenous peoples in my hometown of Adelaide was with

Aunty Leila Rankine, who was a founding member of the Aboriginal Orchestra which eventually evolved into a Centre for Ethnomusicology at Adelaide University, and from which evolved bands such as *Wrong Side of the Road*. Leila's initial objective was simply to get kids off the street, put instruments into their hands, and keep them *off* the streets and *into* music.

There's so much scope for music and its profound effects on the human spirit: is this kind of work at odds with the needs of the potential virtuoso who must dedicate all those hours a day to becoming the artist who will inspire millions? Not everyone can do everything – and perhaps simply awareness and fellow-feeling, talking about it and demonstrating mutual respect for music in all its forms, equity in support and resources, is enough.

On a recent trip to Brazil, I encountered a story about music education at the impoverished edges of São Paulo. Given the instability and gear shifts in Australian Tertiary Education at present, and the keenness for private providers to step into the breach, this is a cautionary tale. In Brazil, private providers could offer a degree in music for around US\$70,000 – this would normally be paid by the family which could ill afford it – a family managing to survive (when many don't) with both mother and father employed, but only really having enough for rent and food and no luxuries. After two years the son or daughter would emerge with that \$70,000 debt hanging over them, and Mum and Dad, and with a degree which the student believed would be an instant passport to a job, but was in fact a completely useless degree, often with the graduate still unable to command the basics of music.

The church stepped in. The not-for-profit *Santa Marcelina* now offers reputable music education to thousands of students, mainly from poorer areas in the São Paulo region: the co-ordinator I spoke with has international oversight of 15,000 students and now has collaborations and exchanges with places as august as the Julliard.

We need to make sure that in an environment in which the private provider is increasingly stepping in, students do get what they pay for (I'm not suggesting for a moment that private providers don't deliver the goods – and indeed there is growing evidence that in many disciplines they may well do a better job and offer instant connections to international parent organisations and institutions) . But it would be good to know, and this of course applies to state-run institutions as well, that the discussion around music futures is as robust and honest as the actual training is appropriate and effective. It's so easy to believe we can teach music in a vacuum – that it is a thing of beauty and joy and a discipline whose justification and lifelong benefit to self and others is self- evident. But that's not the case at all. Education and participation in music has a price, and demands sound strategies – a rigorous framework within which musicians can be trained, non-musicians can participate,

and audiences can be created and nurtured for long-term engagements and, yes, joy and inspiration.

The national capital is an illuminating example, as it should be, and is for so many things, of the passion of Australians for music- all kinds of music. The huge attendances to both free and ticketed events in Canberra this year are a clear indication of that passion. And while it is true that ABC Classic FM's highest per capita ratings are from this region, the strength in attendance and activity in all other musics here indicates enthusiasm across all genres and throughout all demographics. Hence that massive program and outpouring of music in this centenary year. Let's just hope that here, for its own sake, as well as in its role as a beacon to the rest of the country, the support for music continues to grow, and *if* we claim a love of music, that we back that claim with our commitment to music education.

Thankyou.

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