**NECOM Wins Prestigious Arts Music Award for New England Sings!**

NECOM put Armidale on the map by taking out the national award for Excellence in Music Education at the prestigious APRA/AMC Arts Music Awards on Monday 26 August 2013 at the NIDA Parade Theatre in Sydney.

NECOM won the award for its 2012 choral showcase *New England Sings!* that premiered two commissions from Australia’s acclaimed emerging composers: Joe Twist’s *Dreamers of the Day* for secondary choirs & orchestra and Dan Walker’s *The Bird King* for primary choirs (inspired by Shaun Tan’s *The Bird King & Other Sketches*).

Over 700 school students, 40+ teachers from 21 schools in Armidale, Bellingen, Glen Innes, Inverell, Kingstown, Tamworth and Walcha, with 74 musicians from the Armidale Youth Orchestra, Armidale Symphony Orchestra, Armidale City Band and the Armidale Pipe Band, were involved in this project that culminated with 2 sell-out concerts at Lazenby Hall UNE in October 2012. News of NECOM’s achievement was tabled in Parliament by Adam Marshall MP who described it as a ‘red-letter day for Armidale’.

NECOM will present its 3rd *New England Sings!* on Sunday 2 November 2014 at Lazenby Hall that will be the flagship event celebrating its 10th anniversary. Save the date!

Looking back on 2013

2013 was a busy and productive year (has it ever not been at NECOM?) crammed full of our traditional programs and events with the addition of some ground breaking initiatives and important achievements.

In this Retrospective, we take a wide look at those activities across the year and include, for the first time, many ‘snapshots’ written by teachers, students and parents that capture their personal musical experiences during the year.

As a regional Conservatorium operating in a very large regional area, NECOM has always been a ‘conservatorium without walls’ by providing many programs outside the campuses in Armidale and Inverell.

Apart from our Core Programs that keep our hundreds of students and teachers busy every week, NECOM’s music programs traversed an amazing array of places and genres – video-conferenced violin lessons in Bellingen, woodwind lessons in Bingara and Warialda schools, weekly music classes at Ross Hill PS, chamber concerts in tiny schools from Mungindi to Kingstown, and aboriginal songline workshops in Tingha.

Although the New England region has a reasonably small population spread over a very wide area, NECOM attracts a record number of schools and students. We produce such an astonishing number of music hours that we are classified in the top Tier 1 of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums – in comparison, other Tier 1 Conservatoriums are in the bigger population areas of Bathurst, Central Coast, Wagga and Wollongong.

This great achievement is due to the ongoing support and guidance of the NECOM Board members and to NECOM’s dedicated administration and teaching staff. Our Tier 1 status was created by the commitment and professionalism of our staff members who work together so tirelessly to deliver NECOM’s programs and performances – their energy, good humour and dedication is without compare.

Together with our loyal and enthusiastic students, parents and community supporters, we can all be proud of our achievements in 2013. Thank you all.

*Susanne James, Director*
FAREWELL & THANK YOU
NECOM BOARD DIRECTORS

Founding Directors

2013 saw much change when founding directors of the NECOM Board Robyn Driscoll, Dr Bruce Menzies OAM, Sue Metcalfe OAM and Jenifer Sholl retired in May after giving 10 years of outstanding service and support.

Robyn, Bruce, Sue and Jenifer are highly respected leaders of Armidale’s flourishing music community and were instrumental in the establishment of NECOM in 2004, particularly in developing community engagement and collaboration between the major music stakeholder organisations and NECOM.

Chairman Dr Arthur Rickards OAM writes

I wish to acknowledge the sterling contributions of Robyn Driscoll, Bruce Menzies, Sue Metcalfe and Jenifer Sholl as founding directors of NECOM since it was first formed in 2004. Robyn, Sue and Jenifer all have extensive education experience and Bruce could well be known as Armidale’s ‘Mr Music’ for his enthusiastic participation in so many music events every year. Their practical experience and high credibility have helped NECOM to align its activities with community expectations.

Au revoir to Jacki and Jennie

Sadly, Inverell Councillor Jacki Watts resigned in July due to family circumstances. Jacki has been an outstanding leader and her tireless support of the Campus resulted in the Inverell Shire Council’s ongoing financial support. We thank her most sincerely for her dedication and commitment.

In addition, NECOM Deputy Chair Professor Jennie Shaw resigned in October to take up an appointment as Executive Dean at the University of Adelaide. Jennie’s outstanding contribution to music performance, education and to NECOM has been truly remarkable and she will be very much missed!

I give our most sincere thanks to Robyn, Bruce, Sue, Jenifer, Jacki and Jennie - NECOM would not be where it is today without their loyal commitment, enthusiasm and passion for music and education.

Welcome to New Directors

The Board of NECOM congratulates Brett Constable, Liz Egan, Rosemary Leitch and Greg Moin on their election to the Board in May 2013. Together they will bring to NECOM their experience and expertise in a wide range of skills including financial management, legal advice, IT and marketing, fund raising and community engagement.

Susanne James

UNE GRADUATION CEREMONIES
5 & 6 April/12 & 13 April/25 & 26 October

NECOM musicians Georgia Chorley (trumpet), Warwick Dunham (keyboard) and Ruth Strutt (voice) performing at the UNE Graduation ceremonies held in April.

Each year NECOM provides live music at the UNE’s prestigious Graduation Ceremonies and this adds an unforgettable and unique dignity to these very important occasions. In 2013 classical guitarist Steve Tafra presented the pre-ceremony music followed by NECOM’s trio consisting of Music Director Warwick Dunham, Ruth Strutt (voice) and Georgia Chorley (trumpet). The Trio performed an impressive range of classical repertoire including Warwick’s new and evocative jazz arrangements of Somewhere Over the Rainbow and What a Wonderful World to great acclaim. There were many appreciative comments from UNE staff and guests alike after the ceremony.

Heather Pavel

CONCERTS IN 2013

NECOM presented the ACO2 in a sell-out concert in September at the Armidale Town Hall.

2013 was a bumper year with 70+ concerts given in Armidale, Glen Innes, Inverell, Moree, Uralla, Warialda and across the region. NECOM ensembles and students performed in 26 ‘in-house’ concerts and NECOM presented 45 professional concerts to 3,000+ audience members at the Konstantin Shamray Piano Recital, ACO2 at Armidale Town Hall, Louise King Cello Recital, 4 concerts by the Australian Youth Orchestra String Quartet, 3 workshop concerts by The Stiff Gins and 35 chamber trio concerts in small communities across the New England region.

Robyn Driscoll
Dr Bruce Menzies OAM
Sue Metcalfe OAM
Prof. Jennie Shaw
Jenifer Sholl
Cr. Jacki Watts
NECOM CHORAL PROGRAM

Minisingers (K-Yr 2), Cantilena (Yrs 3-6) and New England Singers (Yrs 7-12) flourished with over 145 enrolments in 2013 and each choir gave outstanding performances throughout the year at the Armidale Eisteddfod, International Women’s Day, NECOM @ NERAM, Market Sunday Concert, the Winter Choral Concert and finally the heart-warming Christmas Concert.

In addition, Cantilena Chorale and the New England Singers Chamber Choir gave 36 of our advanced choristers the chance to develop their skills with more challenging repertoire and performances throughout the year.

NECOM’s Choral Program certainly ‘punches well above its weight’ nationally as our students won more of the hotly contested auditions for the Gondwana National Choral School in January 2014 than any other regional centre. Congratulations to Oliver and Jonathon Bruhl, Mia and Isabella Emanuel, Eleanor Logan, Lucy Quast, Shah Biffin, Dakota Love, Zara Blackmore and Kira Dooner.

Thank you and congratulations to our choristers and conductors Amy Walsh, Rowena Tall, Phil Oxley and Leanne Roobol with accompanists Ruth Strutt, Melita Roach, Julia Booth and Robyn Bradley for a sensational 2013.

Choral Concert Wed 28 August

New England Singers celebrated the return of choral conductor Leanne Roobol, with a diverse program in August. Senior chorister Oliver Bruhl led an enthusiastic warm up with the audience members - some with more co-ordination than others. The romantic, traditional piece ‘Over the Sea to Skye’ was accompanied by Dakota Love on cello. Another chorister Amy Roff showed her potential as a conductor with a choral arrangement of Enya’s China Roses and the singers reprised the haunting Billy Joel song ‘And So it Goes’, with Tom Fittler as soloist.

Phil Oxley who generously conducted the choir on behalf of Leanne over the eisteddfod period, returned to conduct Tienan and Leunig’s ‘A Big White Duck’. The chamber choir continued with our talented accompanist Robyn Bradley for ‘In Noctem’ and ‘Come by the Hills’. We finished the night on a high note with the foot tapping Irving Berlin song ‘Stepping Out with my Baby’.

Eleanor Logan, NE Singer

Snapshots

Minisingers (K-Yr 2), Cantilena (Yrs 3-6) and New England Singers (Yrs 7-12) flourished with over 145 enrolments in 2013 and each choir gave outstanding performances throughout the year at the Armidale Eisteddfod, International Women’s Day, NECOM @ NERAM, Market Sunday Concert, the Winter Choral Concert and finally the heart-warming Christmas Concert.

In addition, Cantilena Chorale and the New England Singers Chamber Choir gave 36 of our advanced choristers the chance to develop their skills with more challenging repertoire and performances throughout the year.

Christmas Choral Concert Wed 20 November

The Christmas Choral Concert was the highlight of the year for NECOM choirs and the standing-room only audience.

The concert showcased an impressive range of repertoire, including Cantilena’s Swingin’ with Santa Claus with clever synchronised movements (known as choralography), and the New England Singers Carol of the Bells (with stunning handbell ensemble) and the ever popular Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus.

The Minisingers were a real show stopper with their opening Christmas medley and their sensational encore Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer that almost ‘brought the house down’.

However, the night belonged to our new Side-by-Side Choir in its premier performance that took our breaths away.

Their joy, excitement and boundless energy in their performance was infectious and earned them a rousing standing ovation. To read more of this choir, please go to Special Projects on page 10.

Susanne James
NECOM's Beginner and Instrumental Programs saw a healthy growth in enrolments in 2013 and the hundreds of NECOM students (Kindergarten to adults) achieved impressive results as soloists and in ensembles at NECOM and school concerts, the Armidale Eisteddfod, AMEB and Trinity exams, HSC Recitals and community performance events.

Students held 10 solo concerts and 6 Ensemble Concerts at NECOM throughout the year featuring NECOM’s 9 permanent ensembles:

**Beginners**
- Mini Minim violins & cellos
- Cool Crotchets violins & cellos
- Super Smart Semibreves
- Huff’n’Puffs

**Intermediate & Advanced**
- Armidale Youth String Orchestra
- Armidale Youth Wind Ensemble
- Armidale Youth Orchestra

The Beginner Ensembles were led by NECOM’s outstanding musicians – Robyn Bradley, Suzie-May Camm, Charlotte Low, Sarah McNeall, Jacqui Thompson, Rob Woodhouse and a special appearance by Marian Barford. Special thanks go to Jacqui Thompson who took up the baton for the Super Smart Semibreves mid-year with outstanding musical results, and to Suzie-May Camm who conducted not only her string ensembles but the Huff’n’Puffs at their Christmas concert.

**Snapshot**

Emily Thompson, leader of the Super Smart Semibreves.

Suzie-May Camm conducts the Huff’n’Puffs.

The Mini Minim violins perform at the Christmas Concert.

The audience and musicians enjoy the concert.

**Beginner Strings Concert Sun 14 June**

On Sunday 14 June beginner string families were treated to their first concert of the year and for many children, their first concert!

Compered by Susanne James with teachers Charlotte Low, April Kelson, Sara McNeall and Suzie-May Camm, the concert gave Mums and Dads an insight into the different techniques and methods used by the teachers at each stage of ensemble playing. Concluding the concert Susanne presented awards to students who had achieved a level that allowed them to graduate into the AYSO.

A big Thank You to the teachers and students and especially the parents for your support and commitment to NECOM’s Beginner Strings Program.
THE SYNERGY FOR SUCCESS

The outstanding success of the young musicians in NECOM instrumental programs is due to the commitment of parents, schools and NECOM working together for the benefit of the students’ musical development and aspirations.

In particular, the support of schools is crucial. It is physically impossible for NECOM to give the hundreds of music students their instrumental lesson before or after the 5-day school week and weekend sport. There is simply not enough time.

Therefore, the schools are crucial to supporting the students and parents who are committed to music education by allowing students to have their instrumental lesson during the school day.

This collaboration is a ‘win-win’ for everyone – students are supported by their schools to pursue their musical potential and interests and in turn, these musical students make significant contributions to their school’s music programs. And it allows NECOM employ teachers to provide instrumental tuition to hundreds of students in Armidale and the region.

In 2013, the following schools supported their students by allowing peripatetic music teaching in their schools:

Armidale City Public School
Bellingen High School (via VideoConferencing)
Ben Venue Public School
Bingara Central School
O’Connor Catholic College
PLC
NEG
Ross Hill Public School
St Joseph’s Primary School, Warialda
St Marys Primary School, Armidale
TAS
Waldorf Steiner School
Warialda Public School and High School

The commitment given by parents and schools to student’s music education is exemplary in the New England region and makes Armidale a unique city with an enviable reputation as a cultural leader in NSW. NECOM is extremely proud of its role in helping make this happen. Long may it continue!

Susanne James

2013 FRIENDS OF NECOM

Thank you to all our Friends of NECOM whose generous support helped NECOM purchase a Kawai GX-5 for Studio F03 in September. And special thanks to Board member Rosemary Leitch for hosting the Friends Christmas Drinks in December that featured performances by NECOM scholarship students in the Ribatutta Ensemble and the Armidale Piano Trio.

2013 FRIENDS OF NECOM

Leontine & Ken Barnett
Robyn & Pat Bradley
Syna Choc
Dr John Clifton-Evenest
Brian & Priscilla Connor
Susie Dunn
Rosalind & Roger Epps
Murray & Barbara Giles
John & Robyn Hadfield
Amanda & Sebastian Hempel
Susanne James & Malcolm McClintock
Barbara Jones
Rosemary Leitch
Judith & Richard Makim
Anne Matley
Prof Peter McKeown
Dr Bruce & Pam Menzies
Professor William Noble
Keith & Robyn Power
Jennifer & Colin Sholl
Jeff Siegel & Ms Diana Eades
Dr Karin von Strokirch
Katherine & Greg Tighe
Graham & Jan Wyles

The Kawai GX-5 is unpacked after a long trip from Sydney.

NECOM Friend John Clifton-Evenest tries out the new Kawai.

Ribatutta Ensemble at Christmas Drinks with Music Educator Member Robyn Parker

Mingan Choc, Warwick Dunham, Corinne Arter, Stuart Pavel and Susanne James.

Lorraine Coffey, Sue Metcalfe OAM, Marlene Wissink and Ros Brady.

Cathy Archer, Susanne James, Dr Arthur Rickards OAM and Dr Eric Baker.

David & Helen Gee, Chris Russell, Deidre Rickards OAM and Roger & Roslyn Epps.
NECOM offered an extensive array of workshops and masterclasses to hundreds of instrumental students and staff teachers, regional school students, K-Yr 12 classroom teachers and Music Educator Members in 2013.

It is a challenge for any regional centre to ensure equity of access to the very best music training opportunities for its music community – opportunities that are so easily accessed by those who live in Sydney and larger metropolitan centres in NSW. Therefore NECOM workshops and masterclasses provide an invaluable opportunity for participants to learn from highly qualified international and Australian professionals and to break the ‘tyranny of distance’ and isolation.

Thanks go to the Dept of Education & Communities and the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums for financial support and industry networks that allow NECOM to provide these best-practice activities and to keep Armidale at the ‘cutting edge’. Through their support NECOM mixed it with the very best in 2013 – the Australian Chamber Orchestra’s touring ACO2 and the Concertgebouw voted as the best orchestra in the world – to name just a few!

**Junior Orchestra Workshop 26 & 27 June**

NECOM’s 2013 Junior Orchestra Workshop welcomed 100 excited instrumentalists from Years 3-8 and this year we were privileged to have Ann Phelan as Conductor. Ann (conductor of the Bellingen Orchestra) chose wonderful repertoire that inspired all of us to play our best.

I was one of the tutors responsible for helping three students reach percussive glory! We worked through the following five pieces:

- The Russian Sailors’ Dance
- Hungarian Dance No. 5
- Dark Adventure
- Engines Of Resistance
- Lord Of The Rings Suite

Everybody had a great time on the first day in sectional tutorials and returned the second day for intense rehearsals leading to the afternoon concert for parents who came to see their children play their hearts out.

The orchestra sounded fantastic and performed with gusto! It was interesting as a tutor to note the improvement over the two days.

The music sounded absolutely amazing and I was certainly proud of my students as I’m sure all of my fellow tutors felt the same.

**Student & Professional Development Workshops**

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<td>Mon 4 Feb</td>
<td>Wed 13 March</td>
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<td>Dan Walker Choral Conducting W’shop</td>
<td>Wed 13 March</td>
<td>Wed 13-Fri 15 March</td>
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<td>Yr 10 + HSC Workshops</td>
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<td>Stephen Leek Eisteddfod Composition Workshop</td>
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<td>Junior Orchestra Workshop</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett Jazz Workshop</td>
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<td>Australian Youth Orchestra String Workshops</td>
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<td>Australian Chamber Orchestra String Workshop</td>
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<td>Breathing Workshop with Riley Lee</td>
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<td>Musicians Health w Dr Bronwyn Ackermann</td>
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<td>Concertgebouw Orchestra Workshop (Sydney)</td>
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**Masterclasses**

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<th>Masterclass</th>
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<tr>
<td>Konstantin Shamray - Piano</td>
<td>Wed 1 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise King &amp; Michele Walsh – Strings &amp; Ensembles</td>
<td>Sat 11-Sun 12 May</td>
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<td>Hans-Dieter Michatz – Recorders &amp; Early Music</td>
<td>Sat 27-Sun 28 July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Streeton Trio – Piano and Strings</td>
<td>Sat 9-Sun 10 Nov</td>
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Morgan Broadbent-Wicks (second from left) tutors young percussionists.
The day before Konstantin Shamray’s performance in Armidale a group of advanced piano students and their teachers were privileged to have a master class with Konstantin on the newly refurbished Kawai concert grand piano. Maddy Ryan, Olivia Portell, Patrick Williamson and Jol Choct performed a Debussy prelude, a Chopin prelude, a Chopin ballade and the first movement of a Schubert sonata.

Konstantin’s comments were very positive and constructive. In the Schubert he discussed the changing moods in the exposition and how they could be used to make the music come alive. The need for rhythmic drive in the Debussy prelude was emphasised, combined with generous use of pedal to enhance the impressionistic effect. The two Chopin works were an opportunity to talk about rubato and voicing the melody.

After the class NECOM provided refreshments and it was a wonderful chance to talk to Konstantin informally. I think the students were delighted to discover that such a talented musician was so close to their own ages and was happy to chat about favourite Russian television programs.

All the participants were very grateful to NECOM for organising the master class. Having listened to Konstantin talk about what he considers important musically it was fascinating to sit at his concert the following day and hear his thoughts in practice. His prodigious memory, impeccable phrasing and masterful voicing of the melody were a real inspiration.

Robyn Bradley, Music Educator Member

Gracen Moore, Lauren Grzazek and Ben Ridges with Hans Dieter Michatz (second on left).

The recorder workshops and master classes were a really good learning experience for everyone and Hans was very helpful. His perception of our pieces was great and you could achieve so much with them after he helped. Of course, you would spend a while on mistakes that you’d never had when you practised, but you will never have those problems again!

Gracen Moore

Parent, Berenice Scott
ARMIDALE YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

What a busy and productive year for the AYO Ensembles that performed regularly throughout the year that saw a lot of ‘firsts’. Highlights included the first Not-Sawtell Music Camp (held at NECOM due to flooding at the coast), the annual Garden Party, successful Eisteddfod performances, the AYO’s first North-Western tour and finally the outstanding Gala Concert held at Lazenby Hall for the first time in November.

Congratulations and thanks to the AYO Committee and conductors Warwick Dunham, April Kelson and Nick Negerevich for their outstanding achievements throughout the year.

AYO GARDEN PARTY SUNDAY 7 APRIL

On a stunning Armidale autumn afternoon, guests to the magnificent garden of Rosemary Leitch were delighted by the sounds of the Armidale Youth Orchestras. This annual event was again a sell-out, with guests not only enjoying the music and the glorious food and wine, but a fine afternoon of music performed by groups of very talented young Armidale musicians.

The Armidale Youth Orchestra, Armidale Youth String Orchestra and the Armidale Youth Wind Ensemble performed a range of repertoire, including works by Franz Joseph Haydn, Edward Elgar, George Frederic Handel, Pablo B. Ruiz. Congratulations must go to the accomplished conductors, Warwick Dunham (AYO), April Kelson (AYSO) and Nick Negerevich (AYWE).

Our thanks to Rosemary Leitch for her much valued support in generously opening her garden every year for this AYO fundraising event.

Elizabeth Egan

AYO parents Lisa Quast & Sabine Schmoezl present Rosemary Leitch with a gift of thanks.

Eliza Scott and Angus Gallagher lead the AYO in full flight during the garden party concert.

AYO trumpeters Will Smith and Clarrie Butcher with clarinettist Caitlin Sillar.

The AYWE conducted by Nick Negerevich and assisted by Rob Woodhouse on percussion.

April Kelson conducts the AYSO Violins 1 at the Garden Party.

The AYSO in performance.

The Not-Sawtell Weekend 22 & 23 Feb

Due to torrential rain and flooding our “Not-Sawtell Weekend” took place at NECOM. Although we were unable to muck around at the beach it was a relief that it wasn’t called off completely. Thanks to the AYO Committee who made all the Orchestra stuff happen!

Warwick and the AYO did a superb job performing Gabriel’s Oboe, Hungarian Dance, Haydn’s Symphony 100 and Sleepers Wake Cantata. Congratulations went to our amazing Yr 12s whose commitment and leadership over the last 6 years has been inspiring.

April and the AYSO performed Belle Qui Tiens Ma Vi, Allegro and The Teddy Bears Picnic with sensitivity, class and pink zinc cream on their faces, a fun reminder of our usual beachside venue for this concert.

Nick, Rob and the AYWE performed Sway, Rolling in the Deep, Appalachian Morning and New World Symphony with enormous energy. Many commented on this ensemble’s development over the last 12 months as members showed terrific ensemble skills and congratulations to soloists Maddy Ho, Angus Smith and Archie Woodhouse.

Hopefully next year we will be back at Sawtell, but considering the weather and circumstances, it was a terrific weekend and we set ourselves up for the year with great friendships, just as easily as if we had been at the beach!

Sara McNeal
The Armidale Youth Orchestra’s tour of North Western NSW began on Friday morning of the 21st June. 40 members of the group climbed aboard the bus and headed to Warialda to perform for students at the high school. The audience at Warialda High were very appreciative and heard the orchestra perform works by Brahms and Strauss, through to works by film composers including the theme from Mission Impossible.

The orchestra then headed to Moree where they again performed for students at the local high school. The lively session had the students enthralled, with lots of excitement and emotion displayed from the audience.

After the Moree performance the orchestra members stayed at the caravan park cabins and finished their long day with a dip in the thermal pool.

The following day the orchestra travelled to Green Valley Farm near Tingha to perform for a small but very happy audience during lunch. There was time in the afternoon to have even more fun on the rides and play equipment. That evening the players enjoyed communing around a large campfire before heading back to Armidale on Sunday morning.

The tour was a great success with the members enjoying a very special social event as well as performing for audiences that have rarely, if ever, heard an orchestra perform music live.

Such educational experiences are important for both players and audience with the wonderful sounds of symphonic music and the talents of our young musicians being shared for people in the region.

Thanks go to parents and the orchestra committee for organising and supervising the tour. The AYO is looking forward to several more performances during Terms 3 and 4 this year.

Warwick Dunham
Conductor, Armidale Youth Orchestra

AYO Report
Semester 2 began well for AYSO, with the intake of 10 bright and shiny new members. Many of these wonderful new people are graduates of NECOM’s Super Smart Semibreves and so are seasoned performers.

It is with great excitement that I can announce that AYSO’s viola section has grown to the outstanding number of 5 players - which is bigger than AYO’s current viola section! I’m sure Warwick will be most happy to welcome them all into AYO in time but until then they’re ours! We still have a very strong and wonderful cello section, and our violins are great as usual.

We are getting in touch with our inner pirate again this semester working on an arrangement of music from Pirates of the Caribbean. I expect there will be plenty of “arghing”, at least from the conductor, if you happen to wander along the corridors during our rehearsals. There is also a surprise in store for our Gala concert, as well as what promises to be a lovely performance of the Japanese Folk song Sakura.

April Kelson, AYSO conductor
NECOM's Music Therapy Program in 2013 saw remarkable growth that culminated in one of the most memorable and extraordinary highlights in NECOM's history – the premier performance of the Side-by-Side Choir.

At the start of the year, NECOM's original partner The Ascent Group had to sadly withdraw support due to its own loss in funding. NECOM was left with a huge challenge – to find alternative funding for the program that helps some of Armidale’s most disadvantaged community members:

- PEDAL Early Intervention and School Transition Programs
- Individual/group sessions The Ascent Group clients (user-pays service)
- Pilot project with Freeman House
- Supervision of music therapy student Oneewa Forsyth
- Growing Through Song: Armidale High School Special Unit
- Side by Side – peer secondary school choir
- Concerts for The Jacaranda Social Club, ADC Dementia Day Respite Care Program

NECOM's Music Therapy Program pioneered innovative and unique programs in 2013 and this is due to the ongoing commitment and dedication from Music Therapist Natalie Nugent and Program Manager Corinne Arter. Congratulations and thank you.

And after a tireless search for funding across the year we finally reached our target in October! NECOM gives heartfelt thanks to its supporters, local service clubs and to Adam Marshall MP who lobbied for emergency funding for the program – we could not have done this without you!

- Armidale City Bowling Club
- Armidale Central Rotary Club
- Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club
- Arts NSW
- Pedal Early Childhood Intervention Inc
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

GROWING THROUGH SONG & SIDE-BY-SIDE CHOIR

With invaluable support from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, NECOM created two innovative music projects for teenagers with disabilities or at-risk to engage in the performing arts and to mix with peers outside their immediate communities. In partnership with the Special Unit of Armidale High School (AHS), NECOM Music Therapist Natalie Nugent established two standout projects: Growing Through Song Creative songwriting workshops.

Side-by-Side Peer Choir – AHS Special Unit students alongside their peers (choristers from New England Singers) and siblings. NECOM staffers Natalie Nugent and Warwick Dunham joined AHS teachers Rowena Teege and Deb Rothchild to establish this new incredibly creative and enthusiastic choir.

The Side-by-Side Choir premiered at NECOM’s November Christmas Choral Concert with 4 songs from memory and their finale Christmas is the Best featured their own lyrics. Their electrifying performance was one of the most memorable and heartwarming experiences in NECOM’s history.

Our sincere thanks and congratulations go to the students and teachers of AHS and to Natalie and Warwick for making this such a profoundly moving performance.

Susanne James
CHAMBER MUSIC IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

There is nothing to say except it was WOW, great, fantastic, kids and adults thoroughly enjoyed it, the performers were splendid, knowledgeable and engaging and talked to everyone afterwards and enjoyed sharing our BBQ lunch. We are looking forward to another one somewhere soon!

Bonshaw Public School

Funded by Arts NSW, this special project presented live music concerts to small schools and communities in our region, sometimes giving audiences their first opportunity to hear and see music played live by NECOM’s musicians and guest artists, including the AYO String Quartet and outstanding cellist Louise King.

Based on the original ‘Chamber Music in Schools’ program created by Deidre Rickards OAM, our 2013 special project expanded and gave thousands of students and community audiences a priceless opportunity to hear live music. Over 35 concerts were given in communities from as far afield as: Ashford, Ben Lomond, Black Mountain, Bonshaw, Glen Innes, Kellys Plains, Kingstown, Moonbi, Rocky River, Tintinhull, Uralla, Walcha, Woolbrook.

Our thanks go to Deidre Rickards for her management of this project and to our wonderful musicians who travelled far and wide to perform to so many appreciative students and audiences.

Susanne James

SEEDS OF RENEWAL

Indigenous Early Childhood Music Program

NECOM’s dream to establish an early music program at Tingha, a small disadvantaged community of 800+ inhabitants outside Inverell, finally came true in 2013. After 3 years of seeking funding, NECOM finally received good news that the Becher Foundation and ‘Seeds of Renewal’ funding from the ANZ Bank and FRRR (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal) had been approved.

This funding enabled NECOM to create the first music program at Tingha Public School that included:

- Weekly music classes to over 100 students in K, Yrs 1-2
- A specially written music curriculum to meet the developmental needs and interests of the Tingha PS students
- Purchase of beautiful classroom instruments, CDs and teaching resources
- Song writing workshops and concert by Aboriginal mentors The Stiff Gins
- School concert by the Aust Youth Orchestra String Quartet

We give our sincere thanks to music teacher Ros Oliver, the Becher Foundation (Susan Varga and Anne Coombs), to Bernie Munro ANZ Bank Tamworth and to the FRRR for their support of this invaluable project.

Susanne James
THE STIFF GINS 17-21 JUNE

One of NECOM’s most important music education initiatives established in 2009 is the Aboriginal Mentoring Program ‘Closing the Music Gap’ that brings together leading Aboriginal musicians with Aboriginal students from schools in Armidale, Inverell and Tingha.

2013 saw another very successful and happy project come to fruition when Aboriginal singers Nardi Simpson and Kaleena Briggs (acclaimed vocal duo The Stiff Gins) visited in the week Mon 17-Fri 21 June as Aboriginal artists-in-residence to focus on song writing.

Nardi and Kaleena presented concerts and workshops that introduced language songs and activities for students to ‘create their own songlines’ that were then performed for their school, community members, elders and families. The Stiff Gins worked with students from K-Yr 6 from Ross Hill Public School, Tingha Public School and Minimbah Primary School as well as secondary students from Armidale and Duval High Schools and O’Connor Catholic College.

Stiff Gins Workshop & Concert @ Ross Hill PS – 17 & 18 June

For these two days, 38 students including indigenous students from Yrs 3 and 4 worked with Nardi Simpson and Kaleena Briggs (The Stiff Gins) on musical concepts that were delivered with humour, empathy and the perspective of indigenous Australians.

The Stiff Gins and students performed for the school and community members on Tuesday and sang “Dargar womboowany” (Where is Kangaroo?) in the Gamilaray language and the students’ own lyrics for the song “Just Right for Us” - in which children expressed their ideas about living in Inverell with the tune composed by Nardi and Kaleena. They then performed with Nardi and Kaleena “Morning Star” and entertained the audience with choral piece “Bunuwa” and “The Sharing Song”.

The Stiff Gins also performed songs such as “The River”, about love of family and country and delivered with beautiful vocal harmonies accompanied by Nardi’s very individual guitar style.
As a ‘Conservatorium without Walls’ NECOM presented a wide range of music services at the campus and surrounding district in 2013, including:

- $6,000 in bursaries and scholarships to students in Bingara, Inverell and Warialda
- Mini Minstrels pre-school classes led by Ros Oliver
- Woodwind lessons by FT teacher Wendy Champion at Bingara CS, three schools in Warialda, Ross Hill PS and McIntyre HS, and Campus.
- Weekly Kindergarten music classes by Ros Oliver at Ross Hill PS
- Weekly Kindergarten-Year 2 music classes at Tingha PS
- Professional Development to NECOM teachers Wendy Champion and Ros Oliver
- Cello lessons at the Campus with teacher Charlotte Low
- Aboriginal Mentoring Special Project with The Stiff Gins at Ross Hill PS and Tingha PS
- Studio hire facilities at the Campus

Other events at the Campus and in Inverell included free concerts by the Australian Youth Orchestra String Quartet at Ross Hill and Tingha PS; Meet the Band presented by the Sapphire City Band and Mini Minstrels; Mini Minstrels Concert at the McLean Retirement Village; Piano Workshop organised by Inverell piano teachers for 34 participants; and a Brass Workshop organised by Geoff Croft.

Our sincere thanks go to our partner school Ross Hill PS that sees NECOM deliver weekly music classes, an annual Aboriginal Mentoring Project and woodwind lessons to students in the Concert Band. Teacher Geoff Croft’s tireless commitment to music in his school and community is an incredible gift to Inverell and his support of NECOM has been invaluable. We look forward to working with Geoff and the Sapphire City Bands at the Campus in the future now that the campus is the official home to the bands.

2013 saw us welcome Amanda Pearse as Office Administrator in Term 3 and we are delighted that she is on board. Sadly, we farewelled Councillor Jacki Watts in July - her support and commitment to the Campus was invaluable and she is very much missed. And our sincere thanks go to the Mayor and Councillors of the Inverell Shire Council for their generous financial support of the Campus that has been crucial for its operations.

Amanda Pearse

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Activities in Term 3

Term 3 has been a busy term for music teachers and students alike.

For some, the focus early in the term was final preparation for AMEB exams and the Inverell Eisteddfod conducted in August at the Inverell Town Hall, which is in the throes of renovation. All students should be commended on their efforts and a particular “thank you” to Miss Wendy Champion whose students excelled, with some taking out high honours.

Mini Minstrel’s continues to be a vibrant program, filling Friday mornings with the laughter and musical antics of babies, toddlers and infants alike. Ros Oliver, teacher of Mini Minstrels, extends the program beyond the physical doors of the Inverell campus with sessions being held weekly at Ross Hill Public School.

Both schools entered singing groups into the Eisteddfod this year. Students from Ross Hill Public School were involved in the non-competitive choral section, receiving a glowing report from the adjudicator and being invited to return to perform at the evening concert at which they again sang beautifully.

A brass workshop was held in August by Lisa and Gergely Malyusz and coordinated by Mr Geoff Croft. The morning session was particularly helpful to beginner trumpet students and the afternoon saw a number of players of varying ages come together to prepare and perform some chorales. Lisa and Gergely’s efforts were much appreciated.

We look forward to next term, when NECOM will host the Sapphire City Concert Band Development Program on Thursday afternoons. It is expected that this will consist of two bands, the first catering for early beginners and the second for more experienced musicians aspiring for membership of the senior band.

There is no question that the use of the NECOM facilities is on the rise, catering for a growing number of teachers, students and ensembles.

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STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT IS THE MUSIC EDUCATOR PROGRAM?

NECOM’s Music Educator Member Program is a unique partnership between private studio music teachers and NECOM.

The program offers invaluable benefits and opportunities for regional music teachers and their students to access NECOM activities and services, thereby strengthening and promoting music throughout the community.

For an annual fee of $75.00, private studio music teachers can join up as a Music Educator Member and access the following benefits:

- **NECOM Scholarships and Bursaries** (over $30,000 annually)
- **Scholarship Masterclasses** with visiting guest artists or examiners
- **Concert venues** for studio concerts and exams (including administration support)
- **Discounted hire fees** for teaching studios at the NECOM campuses in Armidale and Inverell
- **Coverage** by APRA/AMCOS photocopying and education licence
- **Referrals to parents or community members seeking music lessons**
- **Advertising - Inclusion of the Music Educator Members list** in the NECOM newsletter and website
- **Teaching opportunities** to teach or perform in NECOM projects and events
- **Professional Development Workshops** - Access (free or discounted) to NECOM PD workshops
- **Invitations to your and your students to attend (free or discounted) NECOM Masterclasses and workshops**

For more information and an application form to become a Music Educator Member, please contact the NECOM office on 6773 6419 or go to the website https://necom.une.edu.au click on ‘About Us’ and scroll down to NECOM Music Educators.
WHAT'S ON @ NECOM in 2014

**FEBRUARY**
Sat 1-Sun 2  Alexander Technique Workshops

**MARCH**
Sat 1, Sun 2  AYO Sawtell Music Camp
Wed 12-Fri 14  Year 10 & HSC Workshops
Sun 16, 4pm  Heritage Homestead Concert #1
Aether Ensemble @ McCrossin’s Mill, Uralla

**APRIL**
Sat 5, 2-5pm  Auditions for The Magic Flute Children’s Chorus
Sun 6, 11am  AYO Garden Party

**MAY**
Sat 3 & Sun 4  Mark Walton Woodwind Bootcamp
Sun 4 May, 2pm  Heritage Homestead Concert #2
Erin Helyard @ Perrott’s Chapel, Kellys Plains
Sun 18, 3pm  ASO Concert

**JUNE**
Sun 15, 2pm  Heritage Homestead Concert #3
Duo Richter-Carrigan @ Chevy Chase
Tues 17, 6pm  Foundation Ensembles Concert
Wed 25-Thurs 26  Junior Orchestra Workshop

**TERM DATES 2014**

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**THANK YOU TO 2013 SUPPORTERS**

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Armidale City Bowling Club
Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club
Becher Foundation
Brian Connor
Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal
Colin Gadd
Inverell Shire Council
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

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