Merry Christmas
It's hard to believe another year has passed so quickly. This year we welcomed Margaret Howard at the beginning of the year and woodwind teacher Nick Negerevich in July. Both teachers have quickly immersed themselves in the musical life of Armidale and have been a great asset to our team.

The NECOM Christmas Choral concert was a wonderful event despite a fire alarm going off the minute the concert commenced. The audience and choirs dutifully filed out of the building and waited for the fire truck to arrive. One Minisinger thought it might be Santa arriving! We finally got going again and were treated to some enthusiastic performances from the Minisingers and Cantilena Singers followed by a wonderful set of Christmas carols from the New England Singers. This was the final concert for their conductor Deidre Rickards and I would like to pay tribute to the incredible standard she has achieved over the last year. This is truly a singers choir. Next year the New England Singers will be conducted by Mr. George Torbay, formerly the Chief Choral Conductor of the NSW Performing Arts Unit.

I was reminded of the enormous progress many of our young string players have made this year at the Beginner Strings Christmas concert on Sunday 2nd December. Ensemble playing is helpful in developing solid rhythm and pitch skills as well as providing a fun group environment – which is important as learning an instrument can often be an isolating experience at first. All the groups performed beautifully and I was particularly impressed by the cellist who lost his place but kept on bowing anyway and managed to get back on track without stopping once. I can see a rosy future in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra one day!

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

David Gee

Born in Newcastle, David Gee studied at the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music and Newcastle Teachers’ College and commenced a music teaching career in 1966 at Inverell High School. He returned to Newcastle to teach at Broadmeadow High School in 1969 and took up the position of Head Teacher-Administration at Oxley High School Tamworth in 1972. David became the first NSW Board of Studies School Liaison Officer based in Tamworth in 1985, and was appointed Deputy Principal of Peel High School in 1986.

During this part of his career David was heavily involved with music in the community. He performed as a singer in musicals and opera including La Boheme, Orpheus in the Underworld, Marriage of Figaro and many Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. He conducted opera, oratorio and musicals in Tamworth and Newcastle including Carmen, La Boheme, Marriage of Figaro, Amahl and the Night Visitors, My Fair Lady, Sound of Music and most of the G&S repertoire. He was permanent conductor of the Tamworth Choral Society for ten years.

In 1989 David took up the position of Principal of Armidale High School and retired in 2003. He continued his involvement with music in the community. This included many appearances as conductor of the Armidale Symphony Orchestra and the Armidale Choral Society. He started a tradition of Last Night of the Proms performances with the orchestra and initiated annual festivals of lessons and carols which were presented at the Uniting Church, St Peters Cathedral and St Mary and St Joseph’s Cathedral for many years.

David has performed as a singer on many occasions in Armidale including oratorio and performances of the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire. David served as President of the Armidale Symphony Orchestra from 2003 till the beginning of 2007.

In the 1990 – 1991 academic year he was Australian Commonwealth Relations Trust Fellow at the London University Institute of Education where he researched the impact of legislative change on school management.

Since retirement David has worked as a Senior Lecturer in School Leadership at the University of New England. He has developed a new Master of Education degree in School Leadership which will accept students for the first time in 2008. He has worked extensively with overseas students including students from Thailand, Vietnam and Bhutan. He has visited Bhutan on two occasions, leading a team which made recommendations for the decentralisation of education in the Kingdom.

David is involved in the community as a member of the Armidale Central Rotary Club and is co-chair, together with his wife Helen, of the Bhutan School Residence Appeal Committee which has successfully raised sufficient funds to build a school residence in a remote part of Bhutan. His hobby is photography which he pursues whenever he has the chance.

David is married to Helen and they have a daughter, Judith, who lives in Melbourne with her husband Will. Judith and Will have two daughters, Georgia and Amelia.
Most people realise that Lyn Williams assumes a significant role in the singing and choral world for children and Armidale students are no exception. Each year we have a handful of exceptional choristers who are accepted from the auditioning process and enter the “Gondwana” choral experience. This will lead them into new Australian repertoire, often especially commissioned, and provide the experience of recording onto a CD which is often released for commercial distribution. Students this year had the opportunity of singing in wonderful venues overseas with other Youth choirs such as the Tapiola choir from Finland.

Lyn has developed an international network with other Youth choirs and this offers the Gondwana choir a unique opportunity. The other choral programme she is associated with is the Sydney Youth Choir and we are investigating the possibility of the New England Singers working with them in Armidale in 2008.

It was only a matter of time before the Director of NECOM invited Lyn to work with Choral conductors in this region. On the 26th September a number of us had the opportunity to hone our skills, investigate new gestures and to revise conducting techniques which many conductors have found useful. Lyn watched and commented with the video camera running the whole time. She was able to work with individuals in such a way that each person left with a better awareness of their strengths and areas of potential. We also gained the opportunity to sing new repertoire and to meet conductors from Coffs Harbour and Tamworth.

The Choral programme which each conductor is associated with will benefit from the informed work undertaken on this day. We look forward to further experiences with this dynamic and inspired musician.

Deidre Rickards

In September, a group of teachers and musicians were lucky enough to participate in a conducting workshop with leader Lyn Williams. Lyn is the Artistic Director of the national children’s choir, Gondwana Voices, and is renowned both in Australia and overseas.

Many of us were nervous, particularly those who hadn’t much experience in conducting our peers! Lyn was a fantastic tutor, taking us all through a number of different styles and techniques, and giving individual coaching to each member. It was a rare opportunity for NECOM educators to work with teachers from the Tamworth and Coffs Harbour Conservatoriums, and was a valuable experience for all.

I’ve been offered the exciting opportunity to be a supervisor at the Gondwana Voices Choral Workshops in January 2008, and am looking forward to working with Lyn again. I would encourage all music teachers to enrol in a conducting course next year – it’s great fun!

Ruth Strutt
Stagefright workshop

Sun Tzu said “If you are ignorant both of your enemy and yourself, you are certain to be in peril”. This was the essence of Karin’s message. After an intense workshop we came to understand that our enemy, anxiety, comes from within us and can be mastered. She herself went through major performance anxiety in her teens, almost to the extent of abandoning the guitar altogether. Thankfully she did not.

So, why didn’t she surrender to her fear? Simply put, she confronted her demons head on. Through psychology and physiology she found out all she could of the workings of the mind and body prior to and during performance. Once she understood these, she began working on proven solutions to stage fright.

Karin’s workshop synthesized a wealth of information into a 2 hour session from which no-one left without a better understanding of both themselves and their anxiety. And by the way, you didn’t have to be a musician to benefit. Anyone who has to perform in public, whether through public speaking, drama or sport would profit by attending.

I spoke to young, less experienced musicians after the workshop who felt very positive and inspired to do better in their next recitals. And as for the old hands present, well, let’s just say you can teach an old dog new tricks, or at least Karin can.

Guitar workshop

On Sunday the 21st October a small group of guitarists gathered at the OTC for a master class with the outstanding international guitarist Karin Schaupp with a number of guitar teachers looking on.

We each played a piece for Karin mindful of the fact that for her to help us improve our playing she was in someway going to be critical about our performance. She was able to help all of us touch up our pieces in just a very short space of time. Listening to her work with everyone else also helped us learn special techniques for solving playing problems. She made a special point of telling us to practice our pieces slowly until we knew them well.

After lunch some of us returned to the OTC to be joined by many more musicians and teacher for the “Stage Fright Workshop” with Karin. We were handed valuable relaxation notes which we worked through over a very relaxing two hours.

Karin explained to us about how she used to experience some degree of stage fright as a child. She talked us through her relaxation exercises and desensitising techniques to reduce the fear of performing. Her process is one of imagining a successful performance weeks before a major performance and continuing this right up until playing your first note.

I got so much out of the day. I am now working on putting some of it into practice.

Bridget Smith
**Oboe Workshop with Gerrit Bon**

I felt privileged to be able to spend an entire day with professional oboist, Gerrit Bon. Throughout the course of the day I attended two master classes and a brilliant concert. The master classes focused on pitch control, technique, knowledge and skill. One important skill we learnt was how to alter our embouchure to tune our pitch. Gerrit also allowed us to witness the shaving and adjusting of his home-made reeds, which were specially altered to suit our individual needs.

This workshop was a great opportunity for oboe students in the New England to find answers to questions unable to be answered in our direct area.

Being able to hear a fully accomplished oboist pick up my old instrument and make heavenly music inspired me to continue on my learning journey.

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**Bassoon Workshop with Peter Musson**

It’s not often a bassoonist in regional Australia can enjoy the presence of an experienced player and educator such as Peter Musson, though this is exactly what occurred on Sunday the 4th of November as local students and other musicians gathered for his bassoon masterclass.

Given the average level of experience of most of the students present Peter mainly explained the basic ins and outs of the bassoon, ranging from how to put it together correctly, to proper cleaning and storage. Even after more than ten years of playing some of this information still came as a surprise to me. After this introduction the students were encouraged to take out their instruments and play some basic studies.

Peter gave us clear and concise answers to any problems we encountered during these exercises which was a real pleasure as the bassoon, being such an “dated and outmoded” instrument (as Peter himself put it), can exhibit an annoyingly large amount of problems.

Another aspect to the masterclass was the instruction of basic, and advanced, bassoon fingering. Peter gave each student their own set of fingering which encompassed two subsets, ‘low quality’ fingering used for fast passages where tone quality and good intonation are not so important, and ‘high quality’ fingering for use in slower and more melodic playing. This was of great advantage to both the beginner and advanced students, despite having me thoroughly confused in the weeks following, as most bassoon fingering charts show one set of fingering which can be very daunting when playing in the higher registers, and is not as suitable for beginner students.

All in all the masterclass was a very enjoyable and educational experience for all present, and as Peter himself expressed interest in returning for more of the same hopefully NECOM will be able to organise another masterclass some time in the near future though next time, as always, I hope to see more students of this fantastic instrument.

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*Serena Riley*  
*Gerrit working with Serena in the masterclass*

*Alex Bell*  
*Above: Peter Musson assisting Brenna Fullard to get started on the bassoon and (left) working with Alex Bell, Zita Druce and Peter Maddox.*
Armidale Youth Orchestra Workshop and Celebration Concert

The Armidale Youth Orchestra celebrated the end of their playing year in an unique concert last Sunday afternoon at the New England Conservatorium of Music. The concert was in memory of, and to celebrate the life of former member Arjun Daniel who lost his life to leukaemia in July of this year.

The concert also celebrated the World Premiere of the Symphony No 1 by young composer Graham Howard, who is in the process of moving to Armidale to join his wife Margaret who is a violin teacher at the Conservatorium. Graham was specially commissioned to write this music for the AYO, the money resulting from a grant acquired by the Conservatorium. The work was conceived to introduce the young AYO players to the style of music written by contemporary composers, but which usually isn't accessible because of its difficulty.

The AYO was also fortunate to acquire a grant from the NSW Government to enable the players to participate in a workshop all day Saturday and Sunday, in which they learned the music. They were helped along by maestro Graham Howard conducting with the help of tutors Garry Clark and Andrew Laurich (Sydney based) and Margaret Howard, Ian Slater and Murray Winton from Armidale. The culmination was the World Premiere performance held on Sunday afternoon.

Armidale should be very proud of these young AYO musicians who gave up their weekend activities for the workshop, because the end result was a magnificent performance of a symphonic work which was extremely challenging. Also on the programme at the concert was the highly acclaimed Armidale Youth String Training Orchestra under the baton of Margaret Howard and the newly established New England Youth Sinfonia directed by Errol Russell. The AYO completed an extremely satisfying and artistically successful concert, giving a spirited performance of Fascinatin’ Rhythm under the direction of Semester 2 conductor, Ian Slater.
To most the Recorder is a small piece of plastic that they were forced to play in Year Seven music lessons. A small piece of plastic that made an awful noise, hardly worthy of the title ‘instrument’. But to a lucky few it is much, much more. For a start, they aren’t even meant to be made out of plastic. We can blame a few WWII scientists and their discovery of this wondrous substance for that one.

Considering the rarity of decent Recorder playing, Armidale is something of a freak town. With several talented teachers, hundreds of students, and producing several A.Mus. Certificates over the years, we certainly punch above our weight.

Now that exams are over and the only thing we need to be worrying about is maybe a NECOM scholarship audition, it isn’t uncommon to see students slacking off, and not practicing as much as Robyn Parker would like. But a very special someone was coming to town, and I’m not talking about Santa. No, on the 4th and 5th of November Alana Blackburn travelled into our small country town with her recorders under her arm. She even has her own website if you want to find out about all of the amazing thing she has done. How many other people can say they hold a Master of Music (performance) degree specializing in Contemporary Japanese Compositions for Recorder?

So for 2 days, we were treated to workshops with Alana. On the Saturday there were the NECOM masterclasses - now we all know what a workshop is like, so I won’t tell you in detail of everything she said, but needless to say our pieces were sounding much nicer afterwards. On Sunday we continued to work her extremely hard with most of the more advanced students having private lessons with her - again everyone gained a great deal of knowledge and enjoyment from this.
WORKSHOPS

Workshop given by Seraphim Trio members, Tim Nankervis & Helen Ayres

Tim is really inspiring Camilla Tafra.

Tim helping Jessie Allen with the shoulder with a mind of it’s own.

Tim demonstrating for Bernard Chung

Melanie Bird knows exactly what Helen is on about in this one!

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CONCERTS

Robyn Driscoll’s studio concert

This year I used the lovely and spacious music room at the Old Teachers College (the Newling Centre) for our annual studio end of year concert. This enabled a large group of students and relatives - parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings - to hear their pride and joy perform a favourite piece in congenial surroundings. We later adjourned home for pizza, snacks and drinks. As there were too many for my music studio, I am grateful to NECOM and UNE Music for the opportunity to use their facilities.

Robyn Driscoll with a full house of willing participants for her studio concert

Elizabeth Colbran performing at the end of year studio concert

Charlton Grant opening the programme in style

Ruth Strutt Music Studio Concert

On a lovely November evening, students from Ruth Strutt Music Studio had their end of year concert. A range of repertoire was on offer, from Oscar and Hammerstein to Disney classics, Italian arias to Norah Jones. An enjoyable night was had by all. Particular congratulations go to Caroline King for being accepted into Gondwana Voices for 2008. Good luck Caroline!

Ruth Strutt

Rebecca Wright

Constance Rolfe with Peter Maddox at the piano
CONCERTS

Necom Choral Christmas Concert

Ruth leading everyone in the Australian version of Jingle Bells as the grand finale to the combined choral concert.

Leanne Roobol conducting Cantilena at the Christmas Concert.

Cantilena members in full voice.

Cantilena conductor, Leanne Roobol and assistant Ruth Strutt along with stalwart accompanist Wendy Huddleston with bouquets presented in appreciation of their work with Cantilena this year.
New England Singers 2007

This vocal ensemble is made up of teenagers from schools in the Armidale district and it extends from students who are in Year 7 to more experienced elective music students who are studying singing and in Year 12. While it has been an SSA grouping this year, Tenors and Basses are always welcome.

As the conductor, I have taken the opportunity to provide a repertoire which is diverse and musically significant. Students always have an intuitive understanding of quality material and knowing this has allowed a selection of works which has included genres and works such as the following:

- Renaissance Madrigal - “All Creatures Now are Merry Minded” - John Bennett
- Chilean Folk Song - “Flowing River”
- American Song - “Amazing Grace”
- English Art Song - “Fly Singing Bird Fly” – Edward Elgar
- 20th Century Liturgical – “Mass for the Children” – John Rutter
- Baroque Opera – Priestess’s Chorus – Rameau
- Traditional Christmas Carols arr. Rutter and Willcocks

This repertoire suits the voice types in the ensemble and as a result, they have achieved considerable success such as winning in the Armidale Eisteddfod and being invited to perform in Sydney Town Hall as part of the “Celebration Concert”. During Term 4 we have combined with the restaurant “Fusions of Flavour” in Hannas arcade where we performed our Carol repertoire to an appreciative audience. Soon after this we delighted the congregation at St Mary’s by singing during the morning Mass. Our final concert this term was the Choral concert arranged by NECOM.

NECOM has received many favourable comments on the success this ensemble has had and I congratulate all members on the improvement they have made with sight-singing and ensemble work. To sing as part of an ensemble requires a specific aural awareness and so many of the students have honed the ability to sing with others and produce a collective sound which enhances the composers intentions.

It is always a privilege developing musical skills with young performers and I applaud those students who have achieved the expectations which we have all shared. I also congratulate those who have worked with me in rehearsals and have supported the ensemble each time they have performed by attending and singing with intelligent commitment to each work. These students know that great choristers are part of this process. New England Singers is a lovely ensemble and with continued enthusiastic support from all individuals will continue to have a great future.

A final thankyou to our accompanist and alto-support person, Naomi O’Hern.

Deidre Rickards
2007 Conductor
New England Singers

Jody Winton, conductor of MiniSingers choir and Deidre Rickards conductor of the New England Singers with their bouquets given in appreciation of their tireless efforts thoughtout the year.
CONCERTS

Violin/Viola Studio Concert

On Sunday 25th November 22 violinists and 1 violist performed solos in my studio concert. Also, a group of 10 violinists and 1 cellist also performed Pachelbel's Canon. For many of them, it was their first time to play that piece with other people and it was certainly a wonderful sound. A range of music was presented during the concert, including pieces from the baroque, classical, romantic and twentieth century eras. Thank you to Peter Maddox for accompanying the students. They all appreciated his warm encouragement and support. I was very pleased with everyone's performance and would like to congratulate all the students and their families on their commitment to their violin/viola studies. I am very pleased with the progress that has been made this year (my first year in Armidale) and look forward to the future.

Marian Barford’s Studio Concert

Nigel Bell playing at Marian’s studio concert

Eliza Scott

Above: Annabel Paul
Left: Marian Barford appreciating the efforts of her students at the studio concert she held.
Below: Jessica Wright performing in the concert.
AYSTO’s fabulous Primary Schools Tour

On Monday 24th September the AYSTO went on a tour of some Armidale Primary Schools. Attired in our new striking purple shirts, we visited Sandon Primary School, St Mary’s School and Newling Public School and gave a 35/40 minute performance at each school. (At St Mary’s we presented the programme twice with half the school there for each performance.)

The ensemble prepared five pieces for the tour: Themes from Harry Potter by John Williams; When the Saints Go Marching In; Sneakin’ Around by Graham Howard; Crocodile Hornpipe by Keith Sharp; and Arctic Fire by Stephen Chin. A number of students also prepared solos or duos for demonstrations of their instrument. Additionally, a number of players were spontaneously called on to demonstrate specific things such as tremolo, harmonics, glissandi, spiccato, walking bass and syncopation. Thank you to all players who did this.

The tour was an enormous success. The AYSTO played very well indeed at each school. The standard of intonation was high, the ensemble work was solid, the overall sound was lush and the excitement of the music was well captured. It was no easy task to give four performances in one day especially for some of the younger players and I am very impressed with how well the ensemble handled the tour. It was certainly interesting for us to experience how we played a little differently at each concert even though we performed the same program each time. The children we gave the concerts to were certainly a very interested audience and we did enjoy having a selected couple at each concert come up and conduct the orchestra! We also received very positive feedback from the staff at each school. A great tour everyone!

Margaret Howard
2007 Beginner String Program

From its inception in 2005, the program has enjoyed rapid expansion with large numbers of children enjoying their string experience as they advance through the Conservatorium’s ensemble programs. They also access a diverse range of workshops and concerts to inspire and complement their growing skills.

Expansion has been a keyword for the staff in 2007 also, with the addition of Sydney violinist Margaret Howard and local cello teacher Sue Metcalfe to the existing teaching team of Marian Barford, Wendy Griffiths and Zana Clarke. Their inclusion brings a wealth of experience and diversity to our program.

2007 has proved to be a defining period for the Beginner String Program. Progression through the program was streamlined at the beginning of ‘07 by the creation of the two string skill group classes “Mini Minims” for ‘07 beginners and “Cool Crotchets” for advanced beginners (separate violins and cellos). The transition group “Super Smart Semibreves” is an initial string orchestra experience that leads directly to the Youth Orchestra Program. It was exciting to see the first four BSP graduates move into the Armidale Youth String Training Orchestra with two more promoted at the end of term 2.

Children from the program have been highly successful in the performing arena this year, participating in the Armidale String Workshop in March and the Junior Orchestral Workshop in June. They also provided dominant performances in the eisteddfod culminating in a very good win for the “Super Smart Semibreves” in their ensemble section.

Two big group concerts and a solo concert are part of our performing year. Student performances are becoming increasingly polished as the basics are mastered and students strive to unlock the musical meaning in their work.

Music and string playing have become an important part of the children’s lives as many now play in school orchestras and have joined choirs as well as their participation in the Beginner String Program.
This year the Youth Guitar Ensemble took part in a mid-year concert along with the New England Guitar Ensemble, the guitar quartet Totally Plucked and students of Steve Tafra, Steve Thorneycroft and Chris Purcell.

At the Armidale Eisteddfod this year the group took 1st place in their category performing the classic blues St James Infirmary.

The end of Term 3 saw the groups playing at Pluckers Night at The Armidale Club.

In Term 4 the Youth Guitar Ensemble participated in two concerts – December 9th at the OTC auditorium, once again with the New England Guitar Ensemble, and also taking part in the evening of events planned for the Council’s turning on the Christmas Lights Ceremony in the Mall on November 30th.

A good year for the younger ensemble – the joint concerts with the older ensemble were a great experience for the younger kids as it gave them a sense of being involved in the Armidale Guitar community, and exposed them to many guitarists at various levels of skill and achievement.

Performing at The Armidale Club and in the mall introduced the group to the wider community and was of course good PR!

Director – Chris Purcell

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Scholarship Profile – Gunar Daniel

For the past nine and a half years, I have experienced many different facets of being both a violinist and a musician. I believe that to be a good instrumentalist, one has to also develop their musical insight. I have been greatly helped through the past years by my teachers: Cathy Ovenden, Emma Chap- man, and my current teacher, Errol Russell. All three teachers have brought their own interpretation and musical insight to their teaching, and I am thankful for this, as it has made me a lot more open to different styles and allowed me to progress in my musical education.

Not that many years ago, I realised that perhaps playing the violin was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, as a performer. I understood that it would be a lot of work, and require much more practice on my part! That decision led me to just recently applying for both the Queensland School of Music and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. I have now completed auditions for both, and the interaction with the staff and students at both faculties has done nothing to dampen my desire to perform professionally.

This past year I have had the pleasure of playing on the UNE’s Smith violin. My TAS music teacher, Deidre Rickards, who taught me up to Year 10, organised this for my HSC, and over the year, I have really come to appreciate being able to play on such a beautiful instrument. For one, it made me sound better! For that opportunity I am really grateful.

On a personal note, playing music, especially in an orchestra and with an ensemble has been tremendous. The friendships made and opportunities experienced have certainly made those hours of practise worthwhile.

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Eleanor Streatfeild – New Cello teacher

Eleanor will be joining the NECOM team in 2008 as our new Cello teacher. Eleanor graduated from Newcastle University with a Bachelor of Music in 2005 and has been offer- ing private cello tuition since 2003.

Since 2004, Eleanor has tutored Strings at Hunter Valley Grammar, Newcastle Grammar and The Newcastle Waldorf Steiner School whilst maintaining her teaching presence at the Newcastle Conservatorium, which included running masterclasses and collaborating with other tutors to organise programs and ensembles for beginners through to advanced students.

Eleanor has a varied performance background participating in numerous orchestras and chamber ensembles. She has held the position of Principal Cellist with Melbourne Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Opera, Hunter Strings, The Conserva- torium Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and The Hunter Symphonia just to name a few!

She performed for 6 years with the Intermezzo Strings Quartet, participated in two AYO National Music Camps and was Continuo cellist with Ros Halton for Hunter Opera’s adapta- tion of Mozart’s Don Giovanni.

Eleanor spent 2007 in Melbourne pursuing her second love, completing her Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics, a field she hopes to explore further through UNE.

NECOM welcomes another talented addition to the Strings Program team!

Contact us now to register for lessons.
Tel: 6772 7203 Email: necom@northnet.com.au
Sapphire Sounds 2007

On November 17 NECOM Inverell Campus presented Sapphire Sounds 2007, the Campus’ inaugural fundraising concert. Featuring local performers – including international concert pianist Keiko Robertson – the night provided something for everyone with classical and contemporary music pieces.

The programme included Wendy Champion and the Flute Choir, Peter Schuhmacher (saxophone), Bernie Killen (guitar and voice), Inverell Male Voice Choir, Clarion Singers, Barbara Wigg (piano), and the Sapphire Concert Band.

In addition to these seasoned musicians, the concert also showcased rising local music students Kaylee Russell (voice), Josephine Gibson (piano), Mikaela Mepham (saxophone), Jack Murray (piano), Ben Cumming (guitar) and Clare and Indi Angel-Auld (flute and clarinet).

A highlight was the unusual “Highland Cathedral” performed by the Sapphire Concert Band featuring three pipers and a drummer from the Inverell Pipe Band.

NECOM Chairman of the Board Dr Arthur Rickards also attended the event and spoke briefly about the NECOM vision and objectives, commending the Inverell Committee on the quality of their work so far. Dr Rickards presented each of the founding members of the NECOM Inverell Campus Committee with certificates of appreciation in recognition of the work put in over the past year to establish the Campus. Inverell Councillors Di Baker and Peter Lloyd spoke on behalf of Inverell Shire Council, again congratulating the Committee and expressing how pleased they were to be supporting the Arts in their local community.

The concert raised over $1500 and was a great event to launch NECOM in Inverell. The feedback and support from the audience was excellent, and the NECOM Inverell Campus Committee is very excited about further developing the Campus in the upcoming year.

Peta Blyth appointed coordinator

Another highlight of Sapphire Sounds was the announcement of the new NECOM Inverell Campus Coordinator. Peta Blyth has accepted the challenge of developing and managing the growth of the Campus, and the committee is delighted to have her skills and experience in the position. Peta studied music at the University of Queensland and the Royal College of Music in London and performed as a soprano with Opera Australia for many years. She currently teaches singing in Inverell as well as organising and performing in the annual Opera in the Paddock.

Campus at Moore Street

The Inverell Campus at Moore Street is now well and truly operational. The Campus offers an ideal location for rehearsals and private teaching with two pianos and kitchen facilities. Many of the Inverell-based private music educators are now using the Campus for their lessons, and the Mini Minstrel classes continue to be held in the main studio.
NECOM Educator members

ARCHER, Cathy
Classroom Teacher
Ph: 6771 4886

BARFORD, Marian
B.Mus., Violin/Viola
Beginner to Advanced
Tutor – NECOM Beginner Strings Program
Ph: 6772 1834

BLYTH, Peta
B.Mus (Hons) BA Dip Ed. L.Mus. A (Piano) Voice ARCM (London) (Voice)
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Clarion Singers; concert and opera artist; adjudicator
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BROWN, Dave
B.A (Mus), Dip.Ed (SecMus) Brass - All instruments at all levels,
Happy to teach to other regional centres via video-conferencing.
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Accompanist (vocal)
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Specialising in recorder for adults; Director of the Trabare Recorder Group; Previously early childhood music teacher
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DAVIDGE, Sharon
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Flute, Piccolo, Fife, Panpipes
Beginners to advanced
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DODDS, Sofia
Friendly, expert tuition
Violin, Viola & Recorder
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Mob: 0428 385 824
syoddds@hotmail.com

DRISCOLL, Robyn
Piano – beginner to diploma levels
Ph: 6772 1349

EDDY, Dave
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Farwell – Janet Million

Local woodwind teacher Janet Million and husband Terry are about to leave Armidale for sunny Queensland. The fairly sudden decision has come about due to family reasons. Both parents are in Brisbane and Janet says that as parents get older and unwell it is important to be there for them.

Janet moved to Armidale in March 2001, taking over students from JoAnn Griffiths. Her studio has had 40 – 60 students, mostly clarinet and saxophone, with a number of flute, oboe, bassoon and piano students. Over the last 7 years Janet has taught at NEGS, TAS, PLC, O'Connor, Duval High School, Armidale City Public School and Ben Venue as well as being a NECOM educator member.

Apart from teaching, Janet has been heavily involved in the Armidale community. She has been on the Eisteddfod committee as section co-ordinator 3 years. On moving to Armidale, Janet inherited the Armidale Clarinet Choir and conducted it for 4 years before starting up a junior group, Clarinetica. This group has won the Intermediate Ensemble section of the Queensland Clarinet and Saxophone Society competition in Brisbane. It has been a wonderful training group for the Clarinet Choir, which is now run by Chris Garden.

On the performance side, Janet has played with the Clarinet Choir, Armidale Symphony Orchestra, UNE Stage Band, Armidale City Band and Musical Society. Shows that Janet has played in include Chicago, Music Man, A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum, Orpheus in the Underworld, South Pacific, Cabaret, Dunbar, and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. With the Symphony Orchestra Janet has played with the Night with Peter Cousens, The Magic of Gilbert and Sullivan and 5 years of the Armidale Music Foundation’s Choral Weekend. In 2003 Janet joined the Tamworth Clarinet Choir on a tour of the South Island of New Zealand. Janet’s versatility branches to brass instruments. Since 2002 she has played Baritone and Euphonium in the Armidale City Band, travelling to Sydney for State Band Championships (coming 1st in 2004!) Whew, I think I am exhausted just reading all that, let alone doing it!

Janet’s husband Terry has also been heavily involved in the musical community, playing Tuba with the Armidale City Band and Symphony Orchestra. Terry has also been involved with playing piano and arranging for The Swing Babes and has been repetiteur and keyboard player for a number of shows for the Musical Society, including being Musical Director and arranger for the recent production of Joseph. After recovering from a recent kidney transplant, Terry will be looking to further his playing and arranging skills in Brisbane.

Whilst the move to Brisbane is a sad decision, the prospect for other exciting musical ventures lies ahead. There are many groups including an A grade Concert Band, Orchestra and Musical Society Janet is looking forward to joining. At this stage the future is slightly uncertain job wise but the aim is to become involved with teaching at a couple of private schools on the Northside of Brisbane. One door closes and another one opens. With Terry still continuing to study externally with a B.Mus degree at UNE, this will not be the last time in Armidale. Expect some visits!