



AGSA Newsletter April 2010

To Members and Friends of the Accompanists' Guild of SA

Some thoughts about the Accompanists' Guild:

Fine Musicians support AGSA

The Guild is blessed to have a wonderful range of outstanding musicians happy to support us and the significance of the Accompanist. Look back at our **2009 guests** – Opera Australia soprano, Teresa La Rocca, with Sydney based international conductor/repetiteur, Simon Kenway; Young Accompanists' Showcase (YAS) masterclass leader, former Geoffrey Parsons Award winner, Leigh Harrold (now Melbourne based) and soloists Peter Handsworth, clarinet, Naomi Hede, soprano, Samantha Hennessey, flute, & Imants Larsens, violin & viola: Festival Musician in Residence, Leslie Howard, with duo recital partner violinist, Niki Vasilakis, Geoffrey Parsons Award soloist, ASO Concertmaster, Natsuko Yoshimoto and State Opera repetiteur mentors Dale Ringland and David Barnard.

The **2010 guests** are equally distinguished - all aware of the significance of the accompanist in their professional lives. Supporting our important secondary level educational program - YAS - in June we have Professor David Lockett leading the masterclass, and the soloists working with the students include ASO violinist, Janet Anderson, former Head of Vocal Studies at the Elder Conservatorium, Keith Hempton, previously ASO cellist now Elder Hall Concert Manager, Claire Oremland, and State Opera and freelance soprano, Louisa Perfect.

Our late June/early July Festival Musician in Residence is Opera Australia's distinguished Assistant Musical Director, Anthony Legge, whose skills as pianist, conductor and vocal coach are legendary in the international world of Opera & Art Song: He is joined by outstanding Adelaide soprano, Rosalind Martin and rising star, tenor, Robert Macfarlane, in a rare recital of the Italian Lieder Book by Hugo Wolf which we are presenting in association with The Firm; our Geoffrey Parsons Award soloist is recently arrived Conservatorium vocal lecturer, international opera star, tenor, Patrick Power; our

August duo piano recitalists are former Geoffrey Parsons Award winners and RCM graduates, Adelaide's Michael Ierace and Melbourne's Amir Farid.

Associates support AGSA

We are indeed fortunate to have continuing association with the Elder Conservatorium in presenting the Geoffrey Parsons Award - this year their representative on the Jury is Stephen Whittington. Our major commercial sponsor is Allans Music. We receive on-going support from Pilgrim Church, St Peter's Cathedral, State Opera of SA, Opera Australia, the Music Teachers' Assn of SA, ANATS plus a new 2010 collaboration with The Firm.

Pianists benefit from AGSA Events

We are particularly proud of our continuing educational program which benefits

Primary School pianists & their associates. This group is lead by Guild President Monika Laczofy who teaches the "babies" about duo concert performance & prepares them for a recital in the Festival

Secondary School Students - who are paired with professional soloists. Organized primarily by Committee member, Gina Macri, these students work with teachers, rehearse with the soloists, then perform in a masterclass and 2 public concerts.

Tertiary students who are encouraged to enter the Geoffrey Parsons Award and prepare for some of the more stringent expectations of the professional collaborative pianist as well as perform in our masterclasses.

All age groups - The Award has no age limit so is available to all. Reaching the Final of this, the premier competition of its kind in Australia, has become a valued CV entry. Our 24 Award winners include pianists who are today notable performers, leaders and teachers ranging from the General Manager of the AMEB (Bernard Depasquale) to the latest addition to the staff of Opera Australia (Anthony Hunt).

All pianists seeking professional development - by attending Guild events - particularly those in association with the annual Musician in Residence when masterclasses and presentations on the art of accompaniment are a feature. Our 2008 Silver Anniversary Conference of Accompanists & Associate Artists presented a comprehensive range of topics relating to the accompanist and enthused over 70 delegates from all Australian states.

Pianists interested in the role of the Repetiteur have already benefitted from the Guild's 2009 initiative in creating a repetiteur mentorship with the State Opera of SA. A group of talented younger pianists observed the piano dress of the *Flying Dutchman* while AGSA member, Andrew Georg, won a mentorship which led to his employment in the Festival production of the Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* as well as being appointed chief repetiteur for SOSA's 2010 production of *Aida*.

All practising accompanists who become Guild Members are able to advertise via the Register of Accompanists which is published every 2 years and updated on the website more frequently.

Friends and Music Lovers benefit from AGSA Events

Concert goers and those interested in learning more about the preparation of performances which involve the accompanist have a range of Guild activities to choose from - starting with the delightful "babies" efforts right through to the excitement of the Parsons competition and up to our formal recitals featuring guest artists. Friends can become members of the Guild by making a donation of \$25 or more.

AGSA has inspired others

Since the Guild began in 1983, groups of Accompanists have formed similar associations along AGSA lines. Over a decade later in 1994, a Queensland Guild was founded and incorporated in 1995. In 2000 came the NSW Guild. In 2004 Darwin established a Register of Accompanists and in 2009 Canberra formed a Guild. In January 2010 there was a Conference of Accompanists in Melbourne and recently New Zealand has put feelers out with a view to starting their own Guild. ALL have referred directly to AGSA for guidance.

2010 -2011 Year of Collaborative Music

The Guild is pleased to acknowledge the efforts of the Music Teachers' National Association of the US in naming 2010 -2011 as the Year of Collaborative Music. We have joined up as members of this world wide event which

acknowledges - for want of a better description - the collaborative pianist.

Members and Friends – please support AGSA

Given the wide range of influence AGSA has exerted over the past quarter century it is imperative we keep going. That is impossible without funding and our largest income comes from our memberships & friends' donations. It is not policy for SAYAB to support any initiative more than twice. This has already happened with the Young Accompanists' Showcase. (\$1600). It is not State or Federal Government Arts policy to support prizes such as the Geoffrey Parsons Award which, at its highest in 2008, offered \$6000 (covered by a once only donation from the Geoffrey Parsons Trust in London) and has now been reduced to \$4000. (very modest for the premier accompanists' award in Australia). So we can continue to maintain a high profile for the accompanist, AGSA needs financial support via:

Membership renewals (we had 90 last year - we have approx 50 renewals now). Please renew.

New Members (Can we make it 100? Can you encourage a new Member?)

Many more Friends (non performers who support us with donations)

Sponsors for events such as the Young Accompanists' Showcase & Parsons Award

Concert and Festival audiences and participants for

Young Accompanists' Showcase, 2.30, Marryatville HS, Sunday June 6 & 20

Festival/Conference, see brochure and website, June 28 to July 3

Wolf Italian Lieder Recital-7.00, Pilgrim Church, Friday July 2

Conference masterclass participants for July 3rd with Anthony Legge

Ierace/Farid Duo Recital - 7.00, Pilgrim Church, Tuesday August 24

In conclusion

Best wishes to all for a vital 2009 with much support for the Accompanist

Diana Harris OAM

Secretary/Founder

The Accompanists' Guild of SA Inc

0407 818 838

diana.harris@museco.id.au

www.accompanist.org.au