Every year, all over the world, tens of thousands of children, teenagers and young adults participate in youth orchestra workshops, camps and concerts. Supported by parents and volunteers, and staffed by some of the world’s leading conductors and instrumentallists, youth orchestras are important institutions for training young musicians. The youth orchestra is a global musical phenomenon but its roles extend far beyond training musicians for orchestral careers. Many orchestras are established to help under-privileged families; some exist to channel talent to parent orchestras, while others aim to achieve inter-racial harmony and overcome cross-cultural divides. Youth orchestras are a culturally significant institution whose wide-ranging social, educational and cultural benefits are often either overlooked or taken for granted.

This is the first detailed scholarly study of youth orchestras. Led by a team of researchers from Monash University in Australia, it focuses on the lives, aims, repertory, economics and educational outcomes that orchestras set out to develop. Focusing mainly on the Australian Youth Orchestra, the study also discusses orchestras from other parts of the world, including North American youth orchestras and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra established by Daniel Barenboim and the late Edward Said. This study is an important and new endeavour that will be essential reading for youth orchestra personnel, music educators and researchers.

Edited by Margaret Kartomi and Kay Dreyfus with David Pear
Australasian Music Research

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Growing Up Making Music: Youth Orchestras in Australia and the World
Australasian Music Research 9

ISBN 978 7340 3768 8
ISSN 1325–5266
Published by Lyrebird Press, Faculty of Music,
The University of Melbourne, Vic. 3010

Typeset by Peter Campbell, PC Publishing
This Collection © 2007 Lyrebird Press, Faculty of Music, The University of Melbourne

Articles published in this volume have been peer-reviewed by qualified readers.

Front Cover: Music from Stuart Greenbaum’s Night Vision for wind quintet (2002), by kind permission of the composer. Photograph (by Shane Reid Photography) of Australian Youth Orchestra performing under the baton of Maestro Diego Masson in the Adelaide Town Hall as part of the Adelaide Festival of Arts 2006. Courtesy of AYO, with permission.

Cataloguing Data
Australasian Music Research
Centre for Studies in Australian Music, University of Melbourne, 1997–2003 (annual)
Lyrebird Press, Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, 2007— (irregular)
I. Musicology—Australasia—Periodicals.
II. University of Melbourne. Lyrebird Press.
III. Title. Australasian Music Research.
780.5 AUS-dc21 ML3797.A97
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This project, undertaken by Professor Kartomi, Dr Dreyfus and Dr Pear, rekindles many memories for me. In 1958, at age 15, I was the first soloist from abroad to perform with the Australian Youth Orchestra (we played the Grieg Concerto) and I returned in 1962 as soloist for Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto. As I discovered at that time, and what has been imprinted on my mind since, is that youth orchestras are a fundamental part of many musicians’ education; they are part of the humanising process. They give young people the chance to improve their musical skills and refine their aesthetic sensibilities.

My association with the Australian Youth Orchestra was not my first, nor last, engagement with youth orchestras for in 1999, along with Edward Said, I established the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which I am humbled to see is the subject of an article in this publication. This orchestra was set up in a bid to bring together young people from parts of the world afflicted by generations of conflict and for them to encounter the possibilities for peace and understanding through music-making and collaboration. The involvement of young people in orchestras is of great benefit, not only for students, but for their families, peers, and the communities that shape and maintain the orchestras. This volume is a testament to the music and cultural lives of youth orchestras, and to the remarkable achievements and possibilities that youth orchestras create.

Daniel Barenboim
Music is an art of early acquisition. Like mathematics, languages and drawing, music is best learned early and learned well. A well-trained ear—and a well-trained eye—are assets for life, and essential equipment for a professional musician.

We both learned so much of our musical art through playing in Australia’s strong network of regional and national youth orchestras. These orchestras, mostly founded between the 1940s and 1960s, arose through a recognition that institutional learning and private tuition were not enough if Australia was regularly to produce professional musicians of world stature. The orchestras also arose through the expansion of liberal education, and the recognition of arts and sports as key ingredients in a balanced curriculum. Youth orchestras, whether local, state or national in their basis, bring together students of talent and expose them to collaborations unavailable in their individual schools or teaching studios. The Queensland Youth Orchestra system, one of the case studies in this volume, is an excellent example of an integrated system of training for the state’s talented youth—a vision driven from its inception by the conductor, John Curro. From it, countless professional musicians have emerged over the last forty years. Its graduates are found in orchestras around Australia and the world. But it has also provided a discipline and vigour in collaborative music making that has been invaluable for those who became lawyers, teachers, diplomats, scientists and business people. It has not only provided a rounding to their professional skill, but has also led to a very special confidence in real-time performance.

The Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in this year, 2007. The orchestra and its associated ensembles exist only through the support and generosity of the state-based youth orchestras, tertiary music schools, hundreds of dedicated instrumental teachers, Australia’s state-based professional orchestras and, of course, the many hundreds of students who undertake its programs each year under the watchful eye of Australia’s finest tutors. As papers in this volume describe, the origins of the Orchestra go back to just after the Second World War when John Bishop and Ruth Alexander set about building a summer
camp that involved both music-making and fitness-training—an age-old recipe of ultimate training for the mind, body and spirit. By 1957, the Australian Youth Orchestra had come into existence alongside this National Music Camp. Over time, year-round administrative support was developed. Now AYO Inc. runs year-round activities, sometimes involving close to one thousand participants and all coordinated by a Sydney-based staff of under a dozen people.

We commend this volume both for its studies from the Australian Youth Orchestra research project, undertaken in 2004–2006 by Margaret Kartomi, David Pear and Kay Dreyfus, and for the inspiring perspectives and articles on youth orchestras in other parts of the world. These articles show that youth orchestras have adapted well to the massive changes in recent decades in travel, technology, educational philosophy and the profession of music. Beneath these essays’ words, however, lies the recognition that youth is always fleeting. Today’s youth is tomorrow’s retiree. Indeed, some of the first Music Campers and original Australian Youth Orchestra members are now well into their seventies. As we have met them around Australia during this anniversary year we have been amazed at how many are still playing, still teaching and still vitally involved in passing on their skills to another generation. Fifty years on they still profess the joy of music. They remain youths, at heart, despite the toll of the passing years. These AYO veterans were pioneers in a musical experiment that has brought rich rewards to the nation’s music making. As crucibles of talent and innovation, youth orchestras are second to none. This volume celebrates all that they contribute to creative suburbs, states and nations, and to building bridges where politics, business, religion or armed force has caused our world to fracture.

Malcolm Gillies
Board Chair, Australian Youth Orchestra

Colin Cornish
CEO, Australian Youth Orchestra
Introduction

How and why did youth orchestras arise in the Americas and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, and in Asia, Africa and Australasia in the second half? Was their widespread development related to the contemporaneous development of youth culture and burgeoning opportunities for travel? How has the youth orchestra sector changed as it proliferated into a large industry over the century? How have particular orchestras constructed their unique identities, with each one normally engendering such enthusiasm and pride in its community? What roles have the youth orchestras’ players, their tutors, instrumental teachers, conductors, artistic advisory and development committees, boards of directors, management teams, patrons, volunteer parents and friends, and members of the music industry—in short, their stakeholders—played in the fortunes of each orchestra and the musical life of its constituency?

These are some of the questions that inspired a team of musicologists at Monash University in Melbourne—Margaret Kartomi, Kay Dreyfus and David Pear—to embark in 2004 on a three-year Australian Research Council-funded research project into the youth orchestra sector of the music industry. With guidance from the general manager of the Australian Youth Orchestra Incorporated (AYO Inc.) Tony Grybowski and colleagues, and from 2006 its CEO Colin Cornish and staff, the project began as a detailed study of the Australian Youth Orchestra’s educational and performance programs for aspiring orchestral musicians and its contribution to Australia’s musical life in its national and international contexts. Thus, Pear and Kartomi observed most of AYO Inc.’s annual programs, interviewed selected stakeholders and, with Dreyfus, systematically studied and interpreted data from AYO’s archival holdings. Kartomi also conducted fieldwork and collected recordings of select overseas youth orchestras and some regions of Australia, the aim being to discover the common ground and the major points of difference between AYO and other youth orchestras in order to begin to work toward constructing a theory of the nature of youth orchestras as a phenomenon.

From the beginning the team decided not to produce another book on the history of Australia’s national music camp and youth orchestra, although considerable value was found in a history that covered the years
In the more globalised world of the 2000s it was felt necessary to expand the concept of the project and view AYO as part of a fast-growing international scene. Indeed, AYO Inc.—the team’s industry partner—expressed the wish that we compare its policies and programs with those of overseas youth orchestras, so that it could learn from others’ experiences, help prepare for some of the challenges it faces, and gauge its own place internationally.

This volume begins by defining what is meant by the phenomenon of ‘youth orchestra’. On the basis of systematic comparison of exemplars around the world, it then presents a global typology of them. Comparative analysis shows that people implicitly classify youth orchestras into two types—the freestanding and the institutional (the latter belonging to a music-educational institution)—and further classify the former into seven sub-types, that is, those drawing their players from a cluster of nation-states, a nation-state, a state within a nation-state, a regional or rural area, a city, a suburban area, or a school. The nature and size of a youth orchestra’s pool of auditioned players tells one a good deal about its identity, standing, and the practical choices (for example of repertoire, personnel, touring activities) that it tends to make. The primary character of division of youth orchestras, then, is the nature and size of the pool of the young players auditioned into them, which in turn relates to an orchestra’s perceived performance quality and reputation.

Thus, the youth orchestras studied in this volume are viewed as part of the classification scheme illustrated on page 7. As will become apparent in the discussions below, each youth orchestra has its unique qualities, born of its place, time and circumstances; but each also has many points in common with others of its species, which is the reason why, we believe, a theory, or theories of the nature of youth orchestras can eventually be developed. This volume aims to act as a springboard for future youth orchestra research; it provides some methodological approaches that researchers may wish to adopt, expand or amend in the future. Indeed, it is hoped that the data and research methodologies presented in this volume will attract future researchers to study the important youth orchestra sector of the music industry and that a body of theory will eventually be developed around it.

Given the size of the youth orchestra topic, the team decided early on to invite several other scholars to contribute articles to this volume. They deal with types of youth orchestras that draw their players from: a cluster of nation states, as exemplified in Ben Etherington’s article; a state within a nation-state, as in the articles by Morwenna Collett and Andrew Mathers; and a network of youth orchestras in a large city, as in the article by Andrea F. Bohlman and Philip V. Bohlman. The Monash team also gathered data on examples of the nation-state sub-type (the second article), the regional sub-type, as in Dreyfus’s article, and the suburban youth orchestra sub-type, also discussed in the first article. Each author draws attention to one or more other facets of youth orchestra activity that relate to their musical and social significance. For example, a daughter and father—co-authors of the Bohlman article—discuss the crucial role of parents and families in the structure of a youth orchestra, and the way in which young pre-professional musicians work upwards from a suburban youth orchestra through a trainer orchestra to obtain a seat in a fully fledged youth, in their case in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Two members of the team and one of the guest authors studied youth orchestral programs that were developed as a response to ethical and socio-political as well as musical concerns. Thus, Kay Dreyfus examines the Young Australian Concert Artists presented by AYO Inc., a program which brings ensemble music-making activities to rural and regional areas, thereby aiming to ameliorate inequities caused by geographical distance between young musicians. Ben Etherington discussed the West-Eastern Divan, a youth orchestra that draws among materially poor children and continues to serve brilliantly to ameliorate the effects of poverty while engaging in high quality music making, somewhat similarly to youth orchestras found in such countries as Bolivia and South Africa.

The team also realised that most youth orchestras have mission statements that express their stakeholders’ particular construct of their identity, which is determined by such factors as the nature, size and age of the pool from which their players are drawn, the general awareness of their organisation’s history, pedigree of tutors and conductors, choice of repertoire, range of programs, funding models, and policy (or lack) of equity of access. The first two articles in the volume explore these issues systematically, while the other seven focus in detail on select issues relevant to the identity of their chosen youth orchestra/s, or one of its programs.

Five of the articles in this volume focus on the Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) itself. Kartomi’s second article deals with the company’s construct of identity, history and educational/performance programs, and its program for regional areas. Andrew Ford writes about the ‘Words about Music’ program at AYO Inc.’s National Music Camp and the ways in which young people can be trained to ‘write sense about music’. David Pear discusses the impact of repertoire choice in three of AYO’s training and concert programs: the national music camp and Seasons 1 and 2. Two articles deal with Australian state youth orchestras: one, by Morwenna Collett, uses the results of interviews and focus group and survey research to demonstrate the multifarious benefits of belonging to youth orchestras, and documents the considerable impact which the Queensland Youth Orchestra has had on thousands of young musicians, while the other, by Andrew Mathers, explores and evaluates the impact of visiting overseas conductors on the annual music camps run by Melbourne Youth Music.

As has been noted, the Monash team’s chief mode of original research was field work. Between them, Pear and Kartomi interviewed participants in AYO Inc.’s auditions and attended its national music camps at the Canberra School of Music (2004, 2006) and the School of Music—Conservatorium at Monash University (2005); AYO’s Season 1 rehearsals and concert performances in Sydney and Canberra (2005), its Season 2 rehearsals and concert performance in the Queensland Arts Centre (2005); a Young Australian Concert Artists program held in Coffs Harbour (2004); a Young Symphonists program in Adelaide (2005); a Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra/AYO Orchestral Career Development program in Hobart (2005); and the London sector of AYO’s 2004 international tour. At the 2004 national music camp at Monash University, Pear and Kartomi attended the rehearsals and concerts/national radio broadcasts of both the Bishop and the Alexander symphony orchestras and the Margaret Greene String Orchestra; the arts administration program, the ‘Words about Music’ program,
and the ‘Scenes and Arias’ concert performance of the composition program. They also made contact with relevant national bodies, such as Youth Orchestras Australia (a network of state-based youth orchestras), the Australian Music Centre, Symphony Australia, and the Australian National Academy of Music.

On field trips to Europe, the USA and China, Kartomi interviewed stakeholders from several freestanding and institutional youth orchestras in the Republic of Ireland, Holland, Germany, Finland and Russia in 2004 and China in 2006, including AYO alumni who had obtained prestigious positions in European professional orchestras. To gauge audience response to AYO Inc.’s concert performances, Kartomi also spoke informally with audience members at interval time and following a YACA concert at Coffs Harbour in 2004; AYO’s concert at the BBC Proms in the Albert Hall, London in 2004; an open rehearsal of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra in Atlanta in 2005; and AYO’s performance of Tristan und Isolde in Brisbane in 2005.

The year 2007 heralds the fiftieth anniversary of the Australian Youth Orchestra’s inception in 1957 when it presented its first major concert in the Sydney Town Hall, following the establishment of the National Music Camp in Melbourne in 1948. The editors and authors of this volume wish to congratulate AYO Inc. on its impressive achievements to date and wish it even greater success in the future, noting the growing strength of the greater youth orchestra movement of which it is part around the world. Long may members of youth orchestras grow up making music together!

Margaret Kartomi
May 2007
Youth Orchestras in the Global Scene

Margaret Kartomi

This article situates Australian and other exemplars of youth orchestras within a global classification system and identifies the many factors that shape their identities. The key indicators of an orchestra’s identity are the nature and extent of its pool of auditioned players, the size of the ensemble, stakeholders’ consciousness of its heritage, the pedigree of its tutors and conductors, choice of repertoire, educational and performance programs and the advancement of equity and other ethical policies. Other indicators include funding, performance standard and administrative structure. National youth orchestras frequently serve as cultural ambassadors, while state, regional, city, suburban and institutional or school orchestras accommodate the demands of their respective constituencies. Orchestras that draw from an international pool of players tend also to play out idealistic socio-political roles. Finally, the article discusses the controversial issue of repertoire choice.

Free-standing youth orchestras were first established in the form of youth camps in the United States, United Kingdom and Europe in the first few decades of the twentieth century, multiplying around the world throughout the second half, and enabling countless young people to play for pleasure, a career, or both.¹ The

¹Youth orchestras in the USA grew continuously from 1950, with eighty percent formed in 1950–1972 (see Ronald E. Schafer, ‘An Analysis of the Practices, Roles and Organizational Structure of the Youth Orchestras of Pennsylvania and their Relationships with School Orchestra Programs,’ DEd diss., Pennsylvania State U, 1982, 3). The United States Youth Symphony Federation compiled and published a list of fifty-four youth orchestras in Youth Symphony News (1964): 51. Some Canadian youth orchestras can trace their histories back to the 1920s, 1930s or 1940s, but many were formed in response to the demand for indigenously trained musicians that followed the growth of adult orchestras in Canada after 1950. See <www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>, accessed 14 August 2006. Some other countries began much later, especially in China, where the first nationally auditioned youth orchestras (including urban/provincial and conservatorium orchestras) date from 1978 (Tang Yating, verbal comm., 23 September 2006).

dates of origin and development of youth orchestras in different countries has varied, as have the age limits of their members. Some orchestras admit children as young as eight and up to the early teenage years, while others focus on young adults from around age eighteen to a maximum of thirty years. Many players, families and supporters of a youth orchestra remain loyal to it all their lives, some returning after their careers have been established to assist its training camps as tutors or conductors. In all, the youth orchestra movement has contributed substantially to the transmission of Western orchestral music across the generations. It has also created links between young musicians both at home and abroad.

Conductors, critics and concert audiences frequently comment that performances by youth orchestras have a different ‘sonic quality’ from that of professional orchestras. What, then, is distinctive about youth orchestras? Writing in 1989, Rena Fruchter canvassed the opinions of a number of conductors active on the American scene. Among them was Bryan Hanson, conductor of the ninety-five-member youth orchestra at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, who attributed the particular sonic quality of youth orchestras to the luxury of the extra time its players have to prepare a program as compared to a professional orchestra. When the players know a work very well—having been thoroughly trained in their sections by professional music tutors and rehearsed under a leading conductor—they tend to play with unity and conviction, even at times producing a thrilling orchestral sound, and bringing out surprising interpretative touches. As Hanson said, ‘A youth orchestra has its own quality which [can be] near professional, with the commitment and enthusiasm of a professional orchestra;’ moreover, ‘in terms of the unorthodox [in repertoire], they will tackle things a professional orchestra would be reluctant to do.’

Leif Bjaland, conductor of the ninety-nine-member San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, attributed this unique sonic quality to the same factor: ‘The difference between youth and professional is time … It takes time for them to understand, not so much to learn the notes. More particularly, it takes time to learn to listen to other sections, and to play as an ensemble,’ yet, he says, his orchestra sounds professional by concert time. William LaRue Jones, conductor of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies of Minnesota, made a similar point: ‘The major difference is that a youth orchestra is doing pieces for the first time. The proficiency is there, but the maturity of knowing what to do stylistically is not there [initially].’ Above all, their performances of orchestral works—usually for their first time—display a freshness, vigour and excitement that guest conductors, concert reviewers and audiences frequently attribute to the players’ youthful zest and zeal.

The performance quality of a youth orchestra may also be explained, in part, by the fact that some of their players are all-round high achievers. A survey by the American Symphony Orchestra League of America in the late 1980s ‘revealed that, apart from their strong musical interests and goals, most youth symphony members have a high academic standing’ and ‘several extra-curricular interests besides music’. More than half reported A-grade averages in school. Half of the 3,500 students surveyed were in accelerated academic programs, and sixty-four percent have received academic honors. Nearly seventy-five percent had won music

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3 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 27.
4 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 27.
5 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 27. Jones founded a youth orchestra that grew to a network of eight for a range of ages and abilities. In 1989, his most advanced orchestra had one hundred members aged fifteen to eighteen years.
awards, and twenty-five percent had won awards for sports. People involved with youth orchestras, too, appear to be universally enthusiastic about them for the many and varied opportunities and benefits they bring to aspiring performers.

For some young players, a youth orchestra is a pathway to a professional music career. For others, it is a source of musical and social enrichment; indeed, many adults claim that performing with a youth orchestra affected their whole life experience. Youth orchestras serve as training grounds not only for musicians but also for conductors (Isaiah Jackson, for example, began as a junior conductor with the New York Youth Symphony). Composers commissioned to write works for youth orchestras are supportive because they know the orchestra will have enough rehearsal time, will play under a good conductor, and will ‘put its all’ into a performance. Some organisations, for example the Australian Youth Orchestra Inc., serve as a career springboard through their special training programs for young music administrators and journalists.

Youth Orchestras Today—and Yesterday
In the early twenty-first century, cyberspace is swarming with information on youth orchestras. In North America and Europe, youth orchestras are already a mammoth industry, and their impact is increasingly felt in Asia, Australasia, South America and Africa. Listed on the Web individually and country-by-country, youth orchestras are mentioned in directories that itemise thousands of orchestral training programs, music camps, festivals, concerts of classical music and tours in which they take part, and their concerts are reviewed in innumerable newspapers and magazines.

As intimated above, youth orchestras began as part of the youth camp tradition, which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The music camps were initiated mostly by local visionaries, secondary and tertiary-school music teachers and private instrumental teachers. From the 1920s, music teachers and academics established a national youth orchestra camp structure for players who would compete for entry into a youth orchestra program. Probably the oldest youth orchestra and camp in the USA is the Portland Youth Philharmonic, founded in 1924 as the Portland Junior Symphony. The first national youth orchestra camp in the USA was presented at Interlochen, Michigan, in 1928.

With growing affluence, and as a result of the baby boom following World War II, adolescents and young adults in Western culture began to obtain considerable freedom, social influence and purchasing power, which

7 As conductor of the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, Isaiah Jackson is the first African-American to conduct a Boston-based orchestra. His many engagements include an appointment as guest conductor of the Queensland Symphony in the 1990s.
8 American sport- and health-oriented school camps began in the 1860s, with the American Camp Association being founded in 1910 <www.acacamp.org>, accessed 26 December 2006.
9 Its history is documented by its long-time conductor Jacob Avshamalov in Music is Where You Make It: A Panoramic View of the Portland Junior Symphony Association (Portland, OR: Portland Junior Symphony Association, 1959).
10 In 1926, conductor Dr Joseph Maddy was invited to establish the First National High School Orchestra for the Music Supervisors’ National Conference (now known as the Music Educators National Conference) in Detroit, and then to duplicate the experience in 1927 at the National Education Association’s Department of Superintendence in Dallas, Texas. The exuberant young musicians pleaded for more, so Maddy organised the first National High School Orchestra Camp at Interlochen in 1928. Now the music camp is part of the annual Interlochen Arts Academy. See <www.interlochen.org>. See also articles by David Pear and by Andrea F. Bohlman and Philip V. Bohlman in this volume.
resulted in the establishment of a youth culture comprising a range of sub-cultures, one of which was, arguably, a youth orchestral sub-culture.¹¹ Youth orchestras began to multiply, with relatively well-funded national youth orchestras being established in many countries, and with travel becoming cheaper and easier, many orchestras began to embark on local, national and international concert tours.¹² From the 1950s, but especially in the 1960s, the activities and tastes of adolescents began to exercise greater social and commercial influence. With such new-found recognition, players in most youth orchestras came to be treated as adults.¹³ The aims of the players were often varied, however: some elite players aimed to become professional musicians; others simply sought the social, life-enriching experience associated with orchestral playing, which signalled a tension in the role of youth orchestras between developing elite talents and nurturing other socio-musical interests.¹⁴

**Research on Youth Orchestras**

Despite its size and significance, the youth orchestra sector of the music industry is a neglected area of research. Theses have been written on youth orchestras in Pennsylvania and the Greater Boston area in the USA, along with books on the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the National Youth Orchestra of Wales.¹⁵ Dorothy Taylor’s book, from the late 1970s, discusses the role of youth orchestras in post-war British music education.¹⁶ An earlier, 1965, publication by the American String Teachers Association is a Code of Ethics for School and Youth Orchestras. The Australian literature includes a thesis, which is a study of the Queensland Youth Orchestra, and one book on the National Music Camp Association and the Australian Youth Orchestra.¹⁷ A volume on the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra includes sections on the history of New Zealand’s national

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¹¹ In his *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950), Erik H. Erikson proposed a theory of psychosocial development through which healthy humans pass in eight stages from infancy to late adulthood, including adolescence (eleven to eighteen years) and early adulthood (eighteen to thirty-four years). Empirical research into Erikson’s theory focused on these two stages and attempts to establish identity. Future research into youth orchestras could develop in part along these lines.

¹² For example, the National Youth Orchestra of Wales was founded in 1945 by the idealist Irwin Walters as instrumental performance was first beginning to flower in Wales, supplementing its choral and solo singing tradition; see Beryl James and David Allsobrook, *First in the World: The Story of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales* (Cardiff: U of Wales Press, 1995) 28. The role of idealistic individuals in the foundation of Australia’s National Music Camp, founded in 1948, is documented in Christopher Symons, *John Bishop: A Life for Music* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1989).

¹³ Although parents and friends are heavily involved in fundraising and other ancillary activities of many youth orchestras, their influence in the organisations themselves has waned somewhat and young players themselves are usually treated as adults as they perform in concerts and on tour. This is the case in the Australian Youth Orchestra at least (Colin Cornish, verbal comm., October 2006).

¹⁴ These tensions are discussed in Andreas Wykydal, ‘Jugendorchester im Spannungsfeld zwischen sozialem Rund und elitarer Talenteschmiedei [Youth Orchestras in the Conflicted Territory between Social Space and Elite Training],’ *Oesterreichische Musikzeitschrift* 59.8–9 (2004): 44–47.


youth orchestra. However, musicologists and music educationists have hardly begun the systematic study of the nature, history, programs and educational philosophies or ethics of youth orchestras. Moreover, music encyclopedias and reference books have devoted only a few entries and sub-sections of articles to the topic. Such omissions may seem inexplicable at first, but they may be due to the fact that scholars who have been researching music organisations have tended to study programs designed for the majority rather than ‘the privileged few’ who take part in youth orchestras’ activities.

This article aims to define the nature of youth orchestras around the world and classifies them into types and subtypes. It then discusses perceptions of the identity of individual youth orchestras in the minds of their stakeholders: the students, their tutors, conductors, instrumental teachers, administrators, volunteers, funding bodies, and audiences. The article concludes with a discussion of the controversial issue of policies and practices of repertoire choice.

**Youth Orchestras: Definitions and Types**

A youth orchestra is defined as a music-educational and performance organisation that has a membership policy, an established program of orchestral auditions and rehearsals, and which normally presents one or two concert seasons every year. It is either free-standing, that is, drawing its players by audition from several secondary and/or tertiary educational institutions and other bodies or across a nation or nations, or it selects its players from within one educational institution (see Figure 1, page 7). Some free-standing youth orchestras in the USA have loose ties to a professional parent orchestra, which usually provides its young ensemble with access to its own professional musicians’ educational and mentoring programs, the use of its concert hall, and assistance in fundraising and publicity. Most free-standing orchestras are funded by the public or private sector, or both, but they also rely on fees and other earnings to survive. The free-standing orchestras audition players of a specified age.

Some surveys in the US exclude institutional orchestras from the category of youth orchestras altogether. Their exclusion is understandable as their constituents are different from those of free-standing orchestras but it can be argued that this view is illogical, given that in both cases their players’ age limits (mostly ranging between twelve and twenty-five years, stretched in some cases by a few years in both directions) and their activities (camps, concerts, tours and social outreach) are so similar. Moreover, institutional youth orchestras have a different history and range of reputations, arising from the music programs in their state or independent

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school or academy. For example, the orchestra at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki has, arguably, a greater reputation than the freestanding ones in Finland. It is, of course, difficult to measure something as intangible as a youth orchestra’s reputation, but many stakeholders believe it is influenced by factors such as the status of the teaching and conducting staff, published reviews of its performances, and whether it appears at prestigious concerts and festivals, national or international. One example of a fully free-standing orchestra is the Australian Youth Orchestra, while the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra is a free-standing one but loosely attached to a professional orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony.

Playing in a free-standing youth orchestra offers a different experience to that of an institutional orchestra, as many who have experienced both types assert. Both orchestras, they say, can reach a high standard of musicianship and interpretation, but free-standing youth orchestras are often more exciting to play in, because they usually audition from a larger pool of players across a wider area and are thus more competitive, which makes it all the more satisfying for players who succeed on being admitted. Furthermore, the players are more likely to be treated like adults. Donn Laurence Mills sums up the experience as follows:

The old school ensemble has a hard time competing with the dazzle and excitement of a greater metropolitan youth symphony. It is a thrill to perform good literature with full instrumentation, to be selected rather than drafted, to receive critical acclaim in the newspapers, to tour, and to make records. Few school orchestra directors would deny a student the experience of playing in a bigger and better orchestra. It’s good for kids to mix with adults and other better-than-average peers.

It’s a thrill … to be in a group endorsed by prominent civic leaders, led by a charismatic ‘professional’ at a downtown concert hall; to have a manager and board of directors; to receive critical acclaim in the papers; tour, make records, and bask in the glow of media attention.

20 Space prohibits discussion here of the many schools around the world that run school orchestras. The twenty music groups at the renowned Eton College (founded in 1440) in the UK, for example, boasts three orchestras, but its choirs, especially the Eton Chapel Choir, are older and have greater fame.

21 One point on which all freestanding youth orchestra conductors whom I interviewed (as well as those mentioned in Fruchter) agreed was the importance of treating young players like adult professionals. ‘Our success lies in strict adherence to high standards and professionalism for the students. We also have a professional situation—including stagehands and printed programs—that is administratively on a level with the San Francisco Symphony’ (Bjaland, conductor of the SFSYO, quoted in Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 28). ‘They are not kids,’ said William Larue Jones of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies in Minnesota. ‘They are talented young musicians, and I approach them as I would any adult orchestra. I don’t talk down or approach them in a way not respectful of their integrity or potential. It’s fascinating’ (Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 28). ‘This is the only field in which children can be confused with adults,’ said Benjamin Zander, conductor of the New England Conservatory’s youth orchestra. He added: ‘There’s no other activity that human beings are engaged in where this could be possible—with the exception, occasionally, of gymnastics’ (Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 28).

22 Donn Laurence Mills, ‘Youth Orchestras: Allies or Adversaries?’ The Instrumentalist 34.1 (1979): 42.

23 Donn Laurence Mills, ‘Youth Orchestras: Tug-of-War for Talent,’ Symphony News 30.6 (1979): 29. The experience that Mills describes applies in particular to the showcase group of free-standing youth orchestras that provide a professional atmosphere for advanced students, as opposed to some institutional and free-standing youth orchestras that mainly function as learning laboratories. The latter, however, are sometimes able to provide students with more individual attention, for example, toward improving intonation and tone, and to provide more opportunities to learn about relevant music theory and the techniques of other instruments.
On the other hand, some institutional orchestras, as in the Chinese conservatories (see discussion below), offer both excitement and a solid educational experience to their players.

Do many young players continue on to a music career? Many youth orchestras report that only a small proportion do so, but as Byron Hanson commented in 1989:

> Whether they become professionals or not, this is a fine thing that we can give to young people: the opportunity to experience the joy of musical performance. There are lots of doctors and lawyers who have graduated from here, treasured their time here, and gone on to support the arts in their communities.

As Benjamin Zander, the conductor of Boston’s Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, wrote of players he had encountered in youth orchestras, ‘Their discipline and dedication are a good model for life.’

### Sub-types of Youth Orchestrass

Youth orchestras break into seven sub-types. Some orchestras select their players from across a group or federation of nation-states, others from a nation-state, yet others from across a state or province within a state. Other orchestras select from a regional/rural area, yet others from a city, a small metropolitan or suburban area, or from an educational institution, for example a school. The nature and size of the pool of players who are auditioned and the related degree of competitiveness for entry is often a determinant of the quality of an orchestra’s performance reputation. Thus, the European Union Youth Orchestra, which is able to select a greater number of near-professional players than most others, has a higher reputation than that of, say, the Stuttgart Youth Orchestra (despite its fine quality), due largely to its much larger pool of competing applicants, comprising as it does the twenty-seven current countries of the European Union.

Some national governments do not fund a national youth orchestra at all, while others fund only institutional youth orchestras. In Finland, for example, very generous government funding is provided for music education.

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21 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 29.

25 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestra on the Go’ 29. This orchestra is of the institutional type, belonging as it does to the New England Conservatory.
in primary, secondary and tertiary music schools and regional music centres, while its free-standing national youth orchestra is privately funded.

1. **Nation-States Sub-type**

The first sub-type of youth orchestra organisations draws players from across a cluster of nation-states and runs international youth orchestras that tend to advocate idealistic socio-political as well as musical goals. An example of such an international umbrella organisation is *Jeunesses Musicales International* (JMI), founded in 1945 at UNESCO’s instigation with the idealistic purpose of working ‘against the causes of international conflict through . . . music’.\(^{26}\) JMI established an information exchange network, acting as a clearing house and advocate for its member youth orchestras, while presenting music camps, festivals competitions and concerts. Funded by the EU, the Spanish and Belgian governments and its members’ subscriptions, JMI can rely, to a degree, for assistance from its national branches, such as the one in Germany.\(^{27}\) However, the logistics of running this multi-national body are complex, given its modest funding. Some developing country members pay reduced rates, while some developed countries (including Australia) are only Associate Members. Running on an uncertain amount of funding has limited JMI from fulfilling the aims that its idealistic creators had hoped for it.

JMI’s flagship orchestra is the *Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra* (JMWO). Founded in 1970, its tradition extends back to 1948. It selects its players from a large pool of potential applicants aged sixteen to twenty-five years from across its member states. From 2004, JMWO re-formed and took up residence in Valencia, Spain, where it receives financial support from the Generalitat Valenciana (regional government of Valencia). Its young players have now made many international tours under famous conductors, playing classical and new repertoire.

Two further organisations work across a cluster of nations in Europe. One is the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO), its members derived from the twenty-seven member states of the EU.\(^{28}\) It is one of hundreds of EU-wide social and cultural organisations that obtain Federation funding to supplement the subscriptions of its member orchestras. It includes some pre-professional training orchestras that focus on building up the skills expected of professional orchestral players. EFNYO runs the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO). That it holds auditions right across the EU enables it to admit players of a very competitive quality. When it performs at EU functions, the EUYO is seen to symbolise the ideal of European unity and the continent’s history of musical achievement. It normally chooses standard repertoire but also plays some new music. Besides EUYO, there is another Europe-wide networking organization, the

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\(^{26}\) UNESCO describes JMI as the world’s biggest youth culture organisation and music network. Created in Brussels in 1945, its first international orchestra performed in The Hague in 1949. The Secretary-General in Brussels reports to the JMI Board, which aims to provide advocacy, communication channels, and fundraising support to members and develops international projects. Half of the activities provided by the JM network are classical music events, with the other half being traditional, contemporary, jazz, pop, rock and hip-hop events. In 2005 its member sections presented 58,000 events, reaching a total audience of six million in more than one thousand cities all around the world. See <www.jmi.net>, accessed 20 October 2006.


\(^{28}\) See <www.efnyo.org>, accessed 20 October 2006. EFNYO was founded in Amsterdam in 2004 by Arthur van Dijk. Its goal is to promote the interests of and connections between Europe’s national youth orchestras (interview with van Dijk, Amsterdam, 24 September 2004).
European Association of Youth Orchestras (EAYO), which was founded in 1990 and includes in its full or associate membership both tertiary and secondary music organisations, the latter including the well-known (secondary-level) Espoo Music Institute in Helsinki.

Another pan-European youth orchestra, the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester (GMJO), was established in Vienna in 1986 at the initiative of Claudio Abbado, its long-time music director, and his colleagues. Aiming to bring together young players from western and eastern Europe at a time when the cold war was at its height, Abbado’s team auditioned young musicians from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, and later the former German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union, moulding them into a pre-professional orchestra. GMJO performs works ranging from classical to contemporary, but as befits its large forces (it includes eighty-six string players alone), it focuses on major Romantic and late Romantic works. In 1992 the GMJO was open to musicians aged up to twenty-six years of age from all over Europe. It organised pre-tour rehearsals each year in one of its cities of residence (Vienna, Bolzano, Paris and Munich), with that city covering its members’ costs, while also receiving some funding from the Council of the EU. Authorised by Abbado, its jury comprises players from the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic and other leading orchestras, and conducts annual auditions in twenty-five cities. The jury also supervises the GMJO’s sectional rehearsals. It tours a few European cities twice a year. At Abbado’s suggestion, GMJO opened an orchestra academy in 1994, offering scholarships to enable its participants to focus entirely on music training. Over the years, GMJO has provided its players with experiences that have enabled many to gain employment with major European symphony and chamber orchestras. In 1996/97 the professional Mahler Chamber Orchestra was founded, made up of former members of GMJO.

Another orchestra that operates across a cluster of nations—the West-Eastern Divan—auditions players in Israel, Palestine and all the Arab countries, and is resident, at the time of writing, in Spain, at the hospitality of the Junta de Andalucía (Autonomous Region of Andalucía). Established by the conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim, with the humanist-scholar Edward Said, its first camp was held in Weimar—the city of Goethe—who, inspired by his interest in Persian poetry, wrote a poem using the phrase ‘West-Eastern Divan’. The orchestra brings together young people from Israel and the Arab countries to hear and recognise the legitimacy of each other’s lives, in the belief that there is no military solution to the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A final example of a nation-states sub-type orchestra is the Asian Youth Orchestra, for young Asian players performing in Asia. A plan for this orchestra was articulated in 1987 by a committee of Hong Kong business people as a non-profit, charitable trust. Three years later, in 1990, the orchestra was formally launched by Yehudi Menuhin (who conducted its first concert) and Richard Pontzious. Its unique goals are to ignite pride for what can be achieved by Asian musicians in Asia and to ameliorate the brain and talent drain that continues to frustrate all Asian nations. Its players, aged fifteen to twenty-five years, are auditioned each year.

For a discussion of the early history and philosophy of the orchestra, see The Silence that Follows the Music: Claudio Abbado, A Portrait, Arthaus Musik, DVD, 807280104998, 2003.

This paragraph is based on my interview, in September 2004, with Stanley Dobbs, an Australian violinist in the Berlin Philharmonic who tutored players of the GMJO for several years. See also <http://www.gmjo.at/about/index.htm>, accessed 20 October 2006.

See <www.barenboim-said.org>. Etherington’s article about issues related to this orchestra also appears in this volume.
from twelve Asian countries and territories: China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The Asian Youth Orchestra auditions 1,000 to 1,500 musicians aged fifteen to twenty-five for its one hundred seats each year. Three weeks of rehearsal camp with professional orchestral players (for example from the Cleveland Orchestra) are followed by another three weeks of performances with international conductors and soloists on tour around Asia, and to Europe, the USA, and Australia, playing in prestigious venues. Its repertoire includes standard orchestral and new Asian works (for example its world premiere of Tan Dun’s *Symphony 1997*).32

2. National Sub-type

The second sub-type of youth orchestra draws its players from young musicians across a nation-state. Like national sporting teams, these orchestras are often called on to assume an ambassadorial role. In Australia, AYO Inc. and its peak orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra, enjoys such flagship status, being proudly displayed by the federal government on important national occasions. Some national youth orchestras lie within the infrastructure of a professional orchestra, for example the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra’s National Youth Orchestra (the NZSO NYO).33

Some national youth orchestras are members of national networking associations. For example, the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain (founded in 1948) is part of the UK’s National Association of Youth Orchestras, which acts as a clearing house for the UK’s network of youth orchestras.34 It also supports festivals such as the International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Valencia, Spain, and the German government-funded ‘young.euro.classic’ Festival of Youth Orchestras that has been operating since 2000.35 Several countries have networking organisations that allow their youth orchestras to keep in touch and promote their interests.36

Some nations provide state funding for their music-educational institutions but expect their freestanding youth orchestras to find private funding. An example is Finland’s *Vivo Sinfoniaorkesteri*, also known as *Vivo*, which serves as one of the many Finnish national music symbols and provides the opportunity for young regional and urban musicians to gain additional orchestral and chamber music competencies through its local concerts and regional and international touring.37 The Finnish government, which decided from the 1960s to build on its musical history and promote the country as an important musical nation, provides significant


33 The NZSO NYO, founded in 1959 by John Hopkins, the fourth resident principal conductor of the National Orchestra of New Zealand (now New Zealand Symphony Orchestra), is administered by a dedicated, part-time manager with funding from the NZSO’s Educational Program and support from its family of sponsors (Brigid O’Meeghan, verbal comm., 7 December 2006).

34 Raitton, *Daring to Excel* 23.


36 In Australia, for example, The Orchestral Association of Australia (TOAN) provides this national, non-profit service for adult and youth orchestras. In the USA, the Youth Orchestra Division of the American Symphony Orchestras League provides a similar service, with the newsletter *Upbeat* containing articles on novel projects such as a newly commissioned Triple Concerto for youth and college orchestras (by young American composer Daron Hagen for local premieres in 2007–2009) to allow them to ‘enjoy more than usual the process of interacting with solo players’ (Jeanette Kreston, ‘Daron Hagen Triple Concerto Commissioning Project for Youth Orchestras,’ *Upbeat* [Newsletter of the Youth Division of the American Symphony Orchestra League] (Fall 2006): 8.

37 This paragraph is based on interviews in 2004 with Aila Sauramo (Executive Director of the Association of Finnish Symphony Orchestras), Miika Asunta (conductor of VIVO) in Helsinki, and others.
funding relative to its gross national product to support its state school music education and professional music-making activities in both urban and regional areas. The Orchestra Act of 1993 guarantees state funding for its professional orchestras, institutional youth orchestras and the 140 publicly-funded music schools for children and adolescents. Besides funding its state school music education system, regional governments partially support many pre-tertiary urban and regional music schools, backed by parental and corporate funding. Their tertiary institutional orchestras within the Sibelius Academy of Music are considered the peak youth orchestral ensembles in the country.

The German Republic’s national youth orchestra was created in 1969 as a pedagogical body for fourteen to twenty-year-old prize winners of the national youth music competition. Its basic funding was provided by the Ministry for Families, the Elderly, Women and Youth, with DaimlerChrysler a major sponsor and the Westdeutschen Rundfunk (West German Radio) as its main media partner. The orchestra meets three times a year for intensive training, rehearsals and concerts and for special holiday projects. The players are tutored by a team of tertiary Hochschule lecturers and professional orchestral musicians coming from leading orchestras, for example, the Berlin Philharmonic. Conductors such as Heinz Holliger and Kurt Masur typically choose not only the standard works of Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner and Mahler but also those by composers of the Second Viennese School, plus works by such composers as Olivier Messiaen, Charles Koechlin and Benjamin Zender. The orchestra has made 100 tours, its highlights including a concert in the former concentration camp at Theresienstadt and a memorial concert for victims of the atomic bomb blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (its repertoire being Mozart’s Requiem and Luigi Nono’s Sul ponte di Hiroshima, playing under Bernhard Klee). The Deutsche-Stiftung Musikleben (German Music Life Foundation) supported two tours, one to the US in 1999 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Berlin air-bridge and the other to Poland and Germany in 2000.

Ireland’s peak youth orchestra organisation, the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras (IAYO), was founded in 1970. It was funded mainly by the Department of Education and Science, the Arts Council of Ireland, its corporate sponsor Toyota Ireland, and fees paid by parents. Auditioning annually across the country, IAYO runs four youth orchestras and offers the winner of the annual Dublin International Piano Competition the opportunity to perform with them. Its flagship orchestra, the National Youth Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (NYSOI) for eighteen to twenty-four year-old players, performs at major concert venues throughout Ireland with international guest conductors, and tours abroad in alternate years (for example, in 2000 and 2004 it appeared at the young.euro.classic festival in Berlin). The second ensemble, the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland (NYOI) for thirteen to eighteen-year olds, also tours the nation. The third orchestra, NYOI Camerata Strings, is an offshoot of NYOI and caters for the same age group (including recent or current NYOI and NYSOI players). Founded in 2003 at the initiative of NYSOI, NYOI Camerata Strings performs throughout Ireland, at international festivals, and on overseas tours. The fourth ensemble, the National Youth String Training Orchestra (NYSTO), offers intensive audition training for string players and works concurrently in residence with the NYOI, presenting a public concert after its summer course has ended.

38 The government sees BJO, in the words of Joachim Gauk, as the ‘Botschafter eines Deutschlands, wie wir es gerne hätten’ (the diplomat of a Germany that we’d like to have), and as ‘Deutschlands jüngsten Spitzenorchester’ (Germany’s youngest top-quality orchestra), see <www.deutsche-stiftung-musikleben.de/projekte/bjo.html>, accessed 14 August 2006.
Founded in 1960, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada originated from the conductor Walter Susskind’s idea for an intensive youth training orchestra. An average of five hundred applicants audition for the orchestra every year for one hundred orchestral places. Its members (aged fourteen to twenty-eight years) meet annually on a university campus for three to four weeks of training, and embark on a two to three week national, or sometimes international, tour. Equity and access are especially important to this orchestra; scholarships are awarded to all musicians to help cover the cost of the training sessions so that economic or geographic circumstance is no barrier to participation. The orchestra is funded by government: for example, the 2006 training session was supported federally through the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as the provincial Arts Councils of Ontario and British Columbia. The orchestra is also supported by corporate and private sponsors and donors, and private and charitable foundations.\(^3^9\)

Youth orchestras are so plentiful in some countries that no particular orchestra is designated to represent the nation as a whole. An example is the USA, where music critics, educators, government leaders and audiences take pride in and identify with their particular local-, state- or city-run youth orchestras, sometimes assigning them a national role, as in the case of the performance of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra at the Atlanta Olympics, for local identities can sometimes be as powerful as national ones.

3. State or Provincial Sub-type

The third sub-type of youth orchestra draws its players from a state within a nation-state, such as the Queensland Youth Orchestra in the Australian state of Queensland,\(^4^0\) or the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland in the United Kingdom. Some state-based orchestras extend their auditioning area over its borders to include part of another state or states, as in the case of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, which is attached to the Cleveland Orchestra and comprises around 110 young musicians drawn from around fifty-one communities across northern Ohio and Pennsylvania. Unlike some other youth orchestras, it regularly performs repertoire that goes beyond the strictly orchestral, presenting choral-orchestral performances with the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Chorus each year. In 1998 it was one of five US youth orchestras invited to participate in the second National Youth Orchestra Festival sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra League.\(^4^1\)

Another state-based ensemble is the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (SFSYO), founded in 1981. It is partnered with the San Francisco Symphony (SFO), whose members coach the young players in weekly sectional and full orchestral rehearsals. The young players are given the opportunity to work with some of SFO’s famous guest artists and participate in a series of subscription concerts each season in Davies Symphony Hall. These concerts are supplemented with other special concerts throughout the year. SFSYO’s first European tour took place in 1986, when it was awarded the City of Vienna Prize for the fifteenth International Youth and Music Festival; and in 1989 it embarked on its first Asian tour.\(^4^2\)

\(^3^9\) In Canada, all orchestras rest on the same funding formula, which requires them to take around fifty percent of their funding from box office receipts (thus requiring a strong base of community support), twenty-five percent from private sponsorship, and twenty-five percent from civic provincial and federal levels of government. See <www.nyoc.org> (for the NYOC) and <www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>, accessed 14 August 2006.

\(^4^0\) For a chronology of the formation of this and other Australian state-based orchestras, see Table 1 in Morwenna Collett’s article in this volume.

\(^4^1\) See <www.clevelandorchestra.com>, accessed 14 August 2006. COYO’s parent body, the Cleveland Orchestra, was founded in 1918 and established at its permanent home, Severance Hall, in 1931. Pierre Boulez was one of its Musical Advisors (from 1965 to 1972).

The Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra (ASYO) draws on high-school-age players throughout the state of Georgia for its 120 to 130 places. Its reputation for performance quality has been widely attributed to the continuity of the leadership of its resident conductor, Gere Flint, over the past twenty-seven years, and its loose association with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, as noted above. Like the Greater Boston Youth Orchestra, the ASYO is supported by private sponsors (especially Coca Cola, whose headquarters are in Atlanta), the city, student membership fees, and box office receipts from its own performances and those of its chamber music groups, as well as parents and friends who provide in-kind support such as transport and labour. Gere Flint treats his young players as adults, expecting disciplined daily practice and high playing standards. He prefers to establish a relaxed, humorous atmosphere rather than imposing the authoritarian approach characteristic of some other conductors. Flint finds that confidence is built and better playing results from the trust he invests in his players. A common concern with any youth orchestra is unhealthy competition between musicians. To avoid this, Flint allocates the string players’ seating at the beginning of the year and prohibits any changes to the arrangement. However, for the brass and wind sections, which are limited to only two to four players each in the orchestra, Flint allows these players to rotate to increase their level of participation.

International exchanges between some city or state-based youth orchestras are undertaken only when there is sufficient funding to pay for their administration. For example, the ASYO and Berlin’s Landesjugendorchester took part in a two-week exchange program in 2003, with half of the Atlanta players travelling to Berlin to play side by side with half of the students of the Berlin orchestra, while the other half of the Berlin players travelled to Atlanta to rehearse and perform alongside the other half of the Atlanta players. The two orchestras played different selections of German and US compositions in Atlanta and Berlin respectively. The players’ parents on both sides billeted and fed their children’s partner-players, thus cutting costs considerably.

4. Regional or Rural Area Sub-type

The fourth sub-type of youth orchestra draws its players from a regional or rural area. Though these orchestras usually benefit from strong local community loyalty, they may encounter problems that their counterparts in larger populated areas normally do not. For example, Schafer’s study of youth orchestras in Pennsylvania, USA, found that some members needed to travel twenty-two to forty miles to their (normally) weekly rehearsals, and none could maintain a full summer season. While some operated on a small budget or no budget at all (relying largely on family and other in-kind support), most orchestras obtained some form of sponsorship.

Another problem Schafer found was that many young players were ambivalent about their school music programs, which was of concern to a third of the music teachers. To counter the problem, over half the teachers required the students to participate in school music ensembles. Some of the orchestras that Schafer

43 ASYO also admits a few players who live just over the state borders; however, since most players are from the one state, I have included the ASYO under the state sub-type of youth orchestras. A similar example is the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra which admits players from over thirty high schools in southwestern Ohio, southeastern Indiana and northern Kentucky.

44 Parents provide meals at rehearsals and concerts, transport, equipment and administrative assistance. Its affiliated organisation, ASO, recently survived bad times, caused by falling stock markets and petrol price rises, by buying a telemarketing company that brings in income, while some other orchestras, which had not taken similarly self-protective measures, died (Gere Flint, verbal comm., 14 November 2005).

45 Information in this paragraph is from Schafer, ‘Youth Orchestras of Pennsylvania,’ especially pages 53, 39, 72 and 73.
studied were run by and/or named after the State’s counties, the municipal offices of which combined the services of their local cities, regional towns and rural areas, and were responsible for larger-scale community services; thus, some communities and their orchestras identified more with their county than their state or city. Schafer also found that some other Pennsylvanian youth orchestras drew their players from a regional or rural area (for example, the Erie Philharmonic Youth Orchestra), or a county within the State (for example, the Delaware County Community Youth Orchestra). Though Schafer’s data about these and nine other youth orchestras in Pennsylvania from 1940 to 1982 is now dated, it identifies some of the operational and identity issues still faced by regional and rural youth orchestras in that and other areas and countries.\(^6\)

5. Metropolitan Sub-type

The fifth sub-type of youth orchestra draws its players from across a metropolitan area.\(^7\) Normally such orchestras operate on larger budgets than their regional and rural counterparts, often employing some part-time salaried as well as non-salaried personnel and possessing greater potential to raise private funds and obtain civic support. Some orchestras offer a summer program for their players. As a city-based orchestra can normally draw on a broader group of players than a regional or rural one, it stands to reason that its playing is likely to be of a higher standard, though exceptions are found.

The Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (TSYO), founded in 1974, is an example of a city-based orchestral training orchestra, which has the advantage of a thirty-year partnership with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO), from which it draws its faculty and celebrity performers who offer master-classes to its members. A ‘side-by-side’ event is presented annually by TSO and TYSO together with a concerto competition, the latter offering the winner the opportunity to perform solo with the professional orchestra.\(^8\) The Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1958, is part of a network of several youth orchestras in a large metropolitan area that is well known for its musical institutions. Other examples are the youth orchestras in all the large metropolises in New Zealand—Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Hamilton, Palmerston North and Wellington—and in most of the smaller towns, which rehearse together for approximately a week a year.\(^9\) The Auckland Youth Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1948 as a training orchestra to bridge the gap between secondary school orchestras and the profession, has presented over a hundred concerts in urban centres outside Auckland and has made six tours to Australia, Hawaii and Canada.\(^50\)

\(^6\) Local youth orchestras began to be created in Pennsylvania from 1940, gradually increasing to twelve by 1982, six of which had no sponsor at all and were self-supporting (Schafer, ‘Youth Orchestras of Pennsylvania’ 69, 70) with the Youth Orchestra of Greater Philadelphia created later from a state-wide pool of players. Local orchestras maintained a balanced instrumentation in each orchestral section. Ninety-two percent required auditions, most operated on a set of guidelines or bylaws, and many had a board of directors (Schafer, ‘Youth Orchestras of Pennsylvania’ 29).

\(^7\) For example, Pennsylvania’s urban-based York Junior Symphony reported having one hundred members, while the Allentown SYO and Symphonette, drawing on a regional and rural base, reported having sixty-five members (Schafer, ‘Youth Orchestras of Pennsylvania’ 29).

\(^8\) See <www.tso.ca/season/youth/youth17.cfm>, accessed 1 November 2006.

\(^9\) Small-town orchestras in New Zealand vary in size and composition according to the availability of instrumentalists. They are funded through local community charities, bequests and sponsorships, and have part-time or voluntary administrators (Joy Tonks, verbal comm., 8 December 2006).

\(^50\) Joy Tonks, verbal comm., 8 December 2006.
6. Suburban Sub-type
The sixth sub-type draws its players mainly from a suburb, or several neighbouring suburbs, of a city. An example is the Robertson Youth Orchestra (RYO) in the Melbourne suburb of Heidelberg. Managed by Heidelberg Orchestras Inc., a non-profit, community umbrella organisation, the RYO grew out of the original Heidelberg Youth Orchestra which was founded in the 1970s by a local violin teacher. Holding weekly rehearsals during school terms and an elective annual music camp (with another group), its young fee-paying players, who are of intermediate-standard, seek ‘cultural skills in a fun and social atmosphere’ and present their Season concerts in a suburban school concert hall. Its string players can also audition for the Junior Strings of Banyule. RYO members who wish to, can eventually become part of the non-professional Heidelberg Orchestra Inc., which performs repertoire from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Attributes of RYO’s identity include its special mix of performance and social activities, its particular pride in its suburban origins and history, its broad repertoire played at camps and concerts, the suburban loyalty of its stakeholders and sponsors, and its financial self-sufficiency.

7. Institutional Sub-type: Tertiary, Secondary or Primary Schools
The seventh sub-type of youth orchestra, one that is attached to an educational institution, is the non-free-standing or institutional type (see Figure 1). The sub-type divides into further sub-types according to whether it selects its players from the body of students enrolled in (i) a national or state tertiary institution, such as a university or a tertiary-level conservatorium; (ii) a primary or secondary school, whether state or privately funded (or both); or—at the next taxonomical level—(iii) a specialist music school for talented children attached to a tertiary, secondary or primary school.

China provides a good example of this seventh sub-type of orchestra. Each of the nine Conservatoires has a pre-tertiary specialist music school for talented children who enrol at primary or secondary school level, can audition into the school orchestras, and receive a broad education that can lead to matriculation. In the nine Conservatories, many final-year school students across the nation—or states within it—audition for a place in their orchestras. A successful student is not only eligible to study music but also to gain a general university place.

The second sub-section of institutional youth orchestras (see Figure 1) consists of orchestras for musically-talented players in specialist music schools that are normally attached to tertiary or secondary institutions, and occasionally to upper primary schools as well. An example is the specialist music secondary school for musically talented children attached to the tertiary-level Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, which caters for the last six years of secondary school.

The third sub-type is so common in countries around the world that mention can only be made of two examples, and both are from Melbourne. They are the main orchestra at Blackburn High School, a public school which until recently had a specialist music program, and the independent Presbyterian Ladies College in Melbourne, whose symphony orchestra toured Asia in 2005 and Europe in 2007.

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52 Peter Ross, Director of Music at PLC, verbal comm., February 2007.
Other Types of Youth Orchestras

The classification in Figure 1 could be expanded to include youth orchestras that are distinguishable by, say, ethnicity, such as the Toronto Chinese Youth Orchestra (TCYO);\(^{53}\) gender, such as the Girl Orchestra of Auschwitz;\(^{54}\) instrumentation, for example, for strings only, as in the Melbourne String Ensemble;\(^{55}\) or by repertoire, such as the Contemporary Youth Orchestra in Cleveland, USA, which plays only new music.\(^{56}\) More categories than listed here may soon need to be distinguished and added to the classification, for ‘New orchestras are created each year to meet the growing demand for music education and positive alternatives for young people.’\(^{57}\)

Youth Orchestras in Some Large Nations

Some large countries, such as the former USSR, present-day Russia and other former Republics of the USSR, and the People’s Republic of China, see no need for a national youth orchestra. Instead they focus on their (mostly) nationally-auditioned institutional orchestras, which their governments ask to represent their nation on occasion. The USA, with its plethora of free-standing and institutional youth orchestras, does not have a national youth orchestra, and neither do some nations with highly developed indigenous musical traditions, such as India and Indonesia.

In China, a very large number of students audition for a place in the institutional (Conservatory) youth orchestras.\(^{58}\) The orchestras in Beijing\(^ {59}\) and other cities sometimes represent their city, province or nation on an ad hoc basis at national events and international tours and festivals, thereby fulfilling a similar function to national youth orchestras.\(^{60}\) The oldest Chinese youth orchestra was founded at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.\(^{58}\)

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\(^{54}\) Created in 1943 by a Polish music teacher by order of the Secret Service, membership in this orchestra protected its prisoner girl players from being gassed in the gas chamber and being worked to death. Several books, including one by one of the inmates, Esther Bejerano Birgit Gardner, as well as a film and a television movie about this orchestra have appeared.

\(^{55}\) Founded in 1995 by its director Fintan Murphy, MSE includes secondary- and tertiary-level players who travel annually on Australian or overseas concert tours.

\(^{56}\) Founded in 1995 by Music Director Liza Grossman, CYO includes players from over forty high schools in Northeast Ohio and surrounding regions. By the end of its tenth annual Season, it had performed thirty-six world premieres in the presence of the respective composer. Rock musicians join CYO each season as part of its ‘Rock the Orchestra Festival’. See <www.cyorchestra.org>, accessed 28 July 2006.


\(^{58}\) Tang Yating of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music (verbal comm., September 2006). Players of orchestral and other Western and Chinese traditional instruments are auditioned annually across China by staff from the Conservatories’ Orchestra Departments. All-China classical Western music auditions began in 1927, but were organised on a really national scale only after the Revolution in 1949, and more thoroughly from 1978, while traditional instrument playing has strongly been encouraged from the 1980s. Children and young teenagers also audition into the pre-tertiary Middle School Orchestra attached to each conservatory.

\(^{59}\) Beijing has two conservatories with their own youth symphony orchestras: the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music Orchestra and the Chinghua University Orchestra, as well as other university orchestras. Shanghai, Tienging, Kwangchow (Canton), Chendu, Shengyang, Wuhan and Xi’an each have one conservatory and a youth orchestra.

\(^{60}\) Some conservatory orchestras perform on international tours and at competitions of youth orchestras. The Beijing Central Conservatory of Music Orchestra, for example, played at the 2004 young.euro.classic festival in Berlin. The Shanghai Conservatory Youth Symphony Orchestra (Shanghai Qinnian Jiao Xiang Yuatuan), which has more than a hundred players selected from all over China, toured in 2004 to Hamburg and Berlin. From the year 2000 it has received occasional funding from the municipal government of Shanghai, benefiting from its economic boom. The other two youth orchestras are the Shanghai Teachers’ University Wanfang Symphony Orchestra and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Symphony Orchestra, which has been touring overseas every year for the past several years; for example, it toured to France in 2004.
Music in 1927 by Chinese artists with a group of Russian and Russian-Jewish exile musicians, and later by Central European Jewish refugees. The orchestra continued into the 1940s, lapsed during the war of independence, and started again in 1949 when the Communist Party took power from the nationalist government, only to close again during the Cultural Revolution (1967 to 1978) and re-open when that era had run its course. Most players in the Shanghai Youth Orchestra originate from and are auditioned in other places than Shanghai.

A similar situation existed in the former USSR, on which the Chinese system was partly based from the 1950s. The USSR had at least thirty youth symphony orchestras, one in each of the fifteen conservatories in the capital cities of its fifteen Republics, plus fifteen more in the large towns, all of which trained students to play the standard repertoire, large-scale nineteenth-century works (for example, Mahler symphonies) and twentieth-century works (for example, by Shostakovich). They presented three or four concerts each year, and prepared students for a place in the many state-funded professional orchestras in each town or city. Orchestral staff of each conservatory auditioned the student instrumentalists, who could apply from all over the USSR, the competition making it difficult to gain a place in the oldest and best known conservatories of Leningrad and Moscow (founded in 1862 and 1864 respectively). As in contemporary China, each conservatory was attached to a pre-tertiary music school for talented children. Sometimes the youth orchestras played on state occasions, but youth choirs and folk music groups were called on more frequently to perform. The situation in post-USSR countries since around 1990 is very different, given the fact that state financial support is no longer offered and even the best adult orchestras have to depend on benefactors for their existence.

**Facets of Identity**

Whatever its type or funding model, a youth orchestra’s members, friends, managers and audiences normally view their company as having a particular identity. What are the facets of their identity? For example, what are the social ideals that some orchestras strive for?

At the international, national, regional, urban and suburban levels, many youth orchestras have their own charter and mission statement that expresses their particular rationale, aims, typical activities, and rules, all of which contribute to their stakeholders’ particular construct of the orchestra’s identity. Identity has been defined as ‘the sum total of feelings on the part of group members about those values, symbols and common histories that identify them as a distinct group.’ While it is difficult to define general categories such as ‘youth orchestras’ with rigour, the identity of particular youth orchestra organisations can be pieced together on the basis of observation, grounded interviews with select stakeholders, and a survey of the company’s charters, vision statements and other documentation.

Comparison of many youth orchestras suggests that the major contributing factors to an orchestra’s

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61 Information about youth orchestras in the former USSR comes from interviews with Dr Yevgeny Meylikh, a former staff member at the Leningrad State Conservatory, and pianist Tamara Smolyar, a former student of the Kiev Conservatory.

62 Most youth orchestras that have mission statements emphasise, in summary, that they aspire to excellence in performance, provide equity of access, train proto-professional musicians, serve as a feeder to an adult orchestra (where relevant), and provide life-enriching skills and musical experiences to their players, whatever career to which they may be aspiring. Orchestras in educational institutions, however, often lack mission statements.


64 Unfortunately, space prohibits a comparative study of the identity of AYO vis-à-vis that of other national youth orchestras, but I have found that a comparative perspective is not essential for understanding an orchestra’s concept of identity.
identity are its goals; age-range of the players; nature and size of the pool from which they are auditioned; diversity of programs; stakeholders’ awareness of its place, origins and history; particular range of ideas it promotes; pedigree of professional tutors, music directors and conductors; repertoire choice; its social rationale and attitude to equity of access to its programs; and, in some cases, the mode in which its programs are self-monitored. It is also influenced by practical matters such as the skill of the management team, the expectations of the board of management and demands made by government and/or private funding bodies, and the quality of marketing and publicity.

Contrary to some supporters’ belief, identity is only partially related to the standards of performance that an orchestra achieves. Supporters of a particular orchestra tend to exalt the quality of its performances, as the web pages and publicity material of many youth orchestras show. Youth—like adult—orchestras may aim to achieve the highest performance standards, yet the quality reached varies, of course, on different occasions. Even the best-informed critics are subjective in assessing standards; thus, performance standard, though important, cannot be regarded as a decisive or primary factor of an orchestra’s identity. Likewise, the reputation of players’ musical competence and ensemble interaction skills are secondary variables. One relatively reliable measure of an orchestra’s performance standard is the size of the pool of players who are auditioned to play in it and the quality of their training and experience.

A youth orchestra’s identity can be shaped, in part, by the way it was founded, which may establish a style and pattern of activity. For example, when British conductor John Hopkins took up his position as resident principal conductor of the National Orchestra of New Zealand in Wellington in 1959, he was keenly aware of the lack of a tertiary conservatorium to train its young players. With the support of the local community, he set up a national youth orchestra and an orchestral training scheme for young players in the school holidays, which was the first of its kind in the world. Like the players of the premier orchestra (now called the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO)), the players in the youth orchestra (then aged up to twenty-one years) were required to attend two calls daily, to acquire the same disciplined rehearsal style as the professional orchestra, and to present concert performances with international soloists. NZSO principals still often coach the youth orchestra sectionals and present workshops. The pattern of disciplined rehearsal style that Hopkins established persists to this day in what is now known as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra National Youth Orchestra, which now admits players up to the age of twenty-five years.

Clearly an orchestra’s identity may also partly be governed by the amount of funding it attracts, for that determines its size and choice of conductors, the amount of touring and other activities it undertakes, the number of administrators it employs, and the extent to which it needs to rely on alumni, parental or volunteer support. The size of an orchestra’s forces can influence its choice of repertoire. Those youth orchestras that can fund a large number of players can tackle works scored for a hundred musicians or more. Interviews with

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65 Chamber music groups, school teachers, instrumental teachers, the Education Department and the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) were among their main supporters. Later the National Youth Orchestra was administered through the NZBS only, and then through the NZSO, with international touring from 1973, a chamber music program now called the Young Artists Program, and a Composer in Residence program; and it changed name to the New Zealand Youth Orchestra in 1982, then the New Zealand Post Youth Orchestra in 1985, and the NZSO NYO from the 1990s. From the late 1970s it engaged international conductors such as Isaiah Jackson and Benjamin Zander (Joy Tonks and Brigid O’Meeghan, verbal comm., 8 December 2006, see also <www.nzso.co.nz>).
experienced conductors also indicate that playing standards are linked to the number of players auditioned, so the number and nature of the players that an orchestra can support may become part of its concept of identity. Identity is also partly influenced by the age of the players. For example, the Greater Boston Youth Orchestra can normally claim to have more advanced-level players than the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra because the higher age limit for Boston is twenty-two and for Atlanta, eighteen years.

In the USA, five youth orchestras are loosely attached to major professional orchestras, thereby gaining special financial advantage, which, in turn, affects critics' perceptions of the quality of their playing. The Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra (ASYO), for example, benefits from the availability of professionals from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) to coach its sections. ASO also provides ASYO with a full-time events manager to help organise its rehearsals and performances, combines ASYO’s publicity with its own, allows ASYO use of its concert hall, and assists with fundraising efforts. One disadvantage of being attached to a professional orchestra in ASYO’s case is that it can rarely afford to go on tour, as the professional parent orchestra has the first choice for any tour funding received. ASYO did, however, recently enjoy a successful exchange project with a Berlin youth orchestra, as mentioned above.

The funding situation for youth orchestras varies considerably between nations according to their relative wealth, their cultural policy, and their position regarding national, provincial and civic government funding compared with private support. Even when national youth orchestras receive ongoing national government funding, some are promised annual funding only. In the United States, no orchestras, whether professional or youth-based, are publicly funded. In Canada there is some public funding at the provincial and civic levels for professional and youth orchestras, but the national youth orchestra and other youth orchestras must continually compete for funding with professional and community orchestras from both the government and private sectors. Like Australia, some European countries, for example Germany, provide outright state subsidy for their national youth orchestra.

Social Ideals

Identity is also influenced by the ideals and ideology with which a youth orchestra may be associated. According to their mission statements, many youth orchestras tend to work towards one or more of three clusters of ideals: (i) the educational, aiming to improve individuals' and groups' playing standards and career prospects; (ii) the socio-ethical, aiming to find ways of promoting class, racial and gender equity and opportunities for players to join in relatively remote areas; and (iii) the socio-political, aiming to improve relations between groups of people at the various levels, for example, between schools, suburbs, cities, regional or rural areas, nations, and groups of nations.

Not surprisingly, very few youth orchestras manage to balance the pursuit of excellence and the equality of access to which they may lay claim. This is because of the contradictions between the need to help some elite

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66 The five orchestras are the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and the St Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. In addition, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), for example, allows its 120-member Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) to present six concerts a year in its Orchestra Hall. Another result of the attachment is that youth orchestra alumni may find positions in the adult orchestra (former CYSO and CYS violinist Jeanette Kreston, interviewed by Fruchter in 1989, identified nine CYSO alumni who had succeeded in obtaining positions in the CSO. See Fruchter, 'Youth Orchestra on the Go' 27).
players break through to a professional career and the task of improving the musical standards and enjoyment of the majority of players, who are not necessarily of the same performance quality. To overcome class, racial, gender and geographical disadvantage, some youth orchestras provide financial assistance to materially poor students, institute programs that improve the chances of racial groups that suffer discrimination and neglect to gain admission, give scholarships to female players, and/or provide financial and special program assistance to participants living in remote areas.

For example, the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra provides financial assistance for poorer students in the community and implements programs that privilege entry by African-American and Latino students, and the Australian Youth Orchestra provides a competitive scholarship for female participants and a special educational program for players living in remoter regional and rural areas. Further, by bringing together players from across a region, nation or group of nations, or even across a school or a suburb, a youth orchestra can increase its members’ sense of unity and pride and improve relations between individual citizens, pupils, provinces and nations; or even between warring sides in a region of conflict, thereby enhancing prospects for peace. The West-Eastern Divan enhances prospects for informed dialogue between Arab, Israeli and some European musicians. Similar aims were pursued in the early days of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, which brought together young people from east and west Europe as a model for peaceful relations during the cold war. The European Union Youth Orchestra also serves a political purpose: to induce its multi-national members to embrace the idea of the socio-economic and political unity of Europe.

A youth orchestra that has resisted class and poverty barriers and attracted much publicity since its foundation in 1975 is the Venezuela Youth Orchestra, which is the first in Latin America to include former street kids, gang members, drug users and abused children among its players and is part of the government’s effort to combat youth crime. Established in Caracas’s Gustavo Machado Center, it is one of 162 youth orchestras founded by Venezuela’s National System of Children’s Orchestras since 1975. It receives grants and donations to train musicians from the age of two and offers refuge and therapy to abused children through playing music together. In its first year, it was reported that many of the fifty-two boys and girls aged nine to seventeen who played in the orchestra gave up their drug habits and showed greater self-confidence and diligence in their education, and in subsequent years many others applied for admission. A twenty-three year old clarinettist had been jailed for armed robbery and heavy drug use six years before he appeared as soloist with the orchestra in Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto, and a young bass player eventually obtained a position in the Berlin Philharmonic. Famous musicians took part in its activities: Berlin Philharmonic conductor Sir Simon Rattle conducts it annually and is helping to attract funding, while the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester founder,

67 Clearly adult orchestras are no longer as extensively male-dominated as they were in the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. At the present time, a degree of gender balance appears to have been achieved in many youth orchestras too, though cross-cultural research is needed to establish the extent to which this is so.

68 See, also, the documentary film on the orchestra, entitled Knowledge is the Beginning, directed by Paul Smaczny, EuroArts International DVD, UPC 825646279227, 2005. It covers the period 1999–2004.


Claudio Abbado, invited it to play in Germany, and tenor Placido Domingo sang at one of its concerts. The orchestra was the realisation of part of a plan devised by its founder, former Education Minister José Antonio Abreu. It aimed to expand orchestral playing in Venezuela as a strategy for raising living standards and eventually to abolish poverty. Its implementation transcended political and government changes, each government giving it increased funding (its 2005 budget was US$23 million). Celebrating its thirtieth anniversary in 2005, Abreu said that its social mission helps the ‘fight of a poor and abandoned child against everything that opposes his full realisation as a human being’ and while Venezuela had only two symphony orchestras in 1975, every state has at least one professional orchestra today. This youth orchestra organisation affected the lives of half a million underprivileged, ‘at-risk’ young people, transforming many of them, and its example inspired other countries (for example Bolivia and Columbia) to launch similar music education programs of their own.

As the apartheid era came to an end in South Africa, a youth orchestra that would eventually acquire national status developed in the black communities of the city of Soweto, while professional orchestras were forced to close for lack of funds. In 1992 a group of four street musicians from a materially poor background began to raise starting capital for a project called the Buskaid String Project that would move between the streets of London and Johannesburg. A musician named Rosemary Nelson started a strings training project for street musicians, giving lessons in a church in Soweto (near Johannesburg) where she founded a music school in 1977. Its fifteen original students grew to seventy as it acquired seven studios, a score library and rehearsal room for students aged five to twenty-four years, one of whom took further studies in Europe and became a teacher in the project. From these developments a self-funded youth orchestra was established, with funding from banks, foundations and private firms. The orchestra eventually gave concerts with conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner at official functions in South Africa and in London, and toured Europe, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. The government recognised the Buskaid String Project as a leading national institution; and as a result the orchestra acquired the informal status of a national youth orchestra, frequently representing the nation on official occasions.  

In 2002, another enterprise was begun to promote racial and class equity: the Youth Orchestras of the Americas (YOA). This orchestra selects its 110 to 120 players (aged fifteen to twenty-five years) from across the twenty countries of South, Central and North America and the Caribbean, three quarters of its players coming from Latin America. Its first tour in 2002 was reported to have reached a concert and media audience of thirteen million.  

71 This paragraph is based on a BBC interview with the Soweto String Quartet by Rosemary Nelson, discussed in Wykydal, ‘Jugendorchester’ 5.

72 The countries are Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, United States, Venezuela and a few others via Costa Rica; and its headquarters are in Washington, DC, with a satellite office in San José, Costa Rica. Each country coordinates its own auditions by teams of volunteer musicians led by recognised lead musicians, with YOA making final decisions on entry, and the number admitted proportionate to the respective country’s population size. Residencies take place in Costa Rica (funded by the Department of Culture, Education and Youth), and Cuernavaca, Mexico. Full scholarships are supplemented by travel and accommodation costs, with funding obtained from corporations, foundations, governments, individuals and Friends of YOA in several countries. Information in this paragraph is based on <www.youthorchestrasoftheamericas.org>, accessed 1 November 2006.

73 In 2003, YOA presented eleven concerts in seven countries in 2002 and eight concerts in sixteen countries, which were widely heard on the media <www.youthorchestrasoftheamericas.org>, accessed 1 November 2006.
venues as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. A documentary film on YOA highlights its musical educational and culturally interactive aspects. Its internationalist, pan-American identity was exemplified by its world premiere performance in 2002 of Voices Rising (Anthem of the Americas), a commissioned work by fifteen young professional composers representing eleven countries of the Americas.

Several orchestras in the USA are attempting to diversify the ethnic backgrounds of their young players. The Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (GBYSO) gained private funding to offer induction programs to young African-American and Latino musicians, involving their parents, who pay only basic tuition costs. The Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra was one that responded to government encouragement to increase its proportion of Afro-American and Hispanic players through its Talent Development program for students ‘of colour’, which provided scholarships for them to attend camps that facilitated their subsequent admission into the orchestra; however, this scheme has met with limited success to date. Compared to the two percent of players of Middle Eastern descent and one percent of American Indian descent in ASYO, its Asian-American participation is high, at thirty percent.

Some youth orchestra programs are designed to cater for young people disadvantaged by living in isolated or regional areas. One example is the Australian Youth Orchestra’s Young Australian Concert Artists program (see article by Dreyfus below). Another example is the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras (IAYO), which recognises that the musicians in the youth orchestras it runs come mainly from the urban Dublin, Cork and Galway areas, with little or no participation from some midland counties. As the Irish economy began to improve from the mid to late 1990s, IAYO tried to improve access to music education in what is termed ‘peripheral areas’ (poorer, non-urban parts of the country). Results of its research showed that counties in the midlands and northwest were much more musically deprived counties than others and needed development. Yet special efforts made to establish live music making and education in the county of Sligo, which is classed as a deprived youth music area, resulted in only one young player being admitted into the NYOI. Irish fiddle-playing, which is still informally valued as ‘pub culture’ in some remote areas, obtained Arts Council

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75 André de Quadros, verbal comm., October 2006. GBYSO comprises: about one hundred advanced players in its Senior Orchestra, which tours internationally every two years; about one hundred players of its Repertory Orchestra, who start the season at the GBYSO Camp (the New England Music Camp was founded in 1937); the Repertory Sinfonietta and Repertory Camerata chamber orchestras that focus on classical era works; the ninety-or-so-member Junior Repertory Orchestra; and the Young People’s String Orchestra for children, all of which ensembles have played in such venues as Symphony Hall. GBYSO also runs a Chamber Music program and an Intensive Community Program which provides string instrument instruction for under-represented youth. See <www.gbyso.org>, accessed 20 October 2006.

76 In 2001, as ASYO’s files indicate, no students ‘of colour’ were admitted, whereas in 2002, eight African-Americans were admitted; in 2003, seven African-Americans and two Latinos joined up; and in 2005, five African-Americans and three Latinos were admitted. No statistics were kept before 2001 (Gere Flint, verbal comm., November 2004).

77 This account of Irish youth orchestras is based on interviews with Joanna Crooks, NYOI general manager; Candace Whitehead, head of orchestral studies at the School of Music, Cork Institute of Technology and Agnes O’Kane of the IAYO in Cork in August 2004; and Fergus Sheil (an Irish conductor who was employed by the Australian Youth Orchestra) in July 2005. See also <www.nyoi.ie>, accessed 20 October 2006.

78 In 1999, acting on an initiative by the local government arts office in partnership with Music Network, the state agency for the promotion of music aimed to develop young music-making opportunities in the Sligo area. A professional violinist relocated into the community and set up a pre-tertiary Music Academy.

and private support, which indirectly assisted the classical instrumental scene. It resulted in some young people learning to play both classical and folk violin, thus raising prospects for greater access for youth music making in both scenes. In contrast, the musically well-established area in and around the city of Cork has a fast-expanding youth orchestra culture. In 2005, the EU chose Cork as the European City of Culture,\(^{80}\) which attracted increased funding from the EU, the state, and private sources. Similarly, the town of Galway has built on its existing music activity by giving a professional quartet a home, aiming to develop youth music making, open a music school and run a festival.\(^ {81}\)

**Youth Orchestra Camps and Festivals**

How do pre-professional players in youth orchestras obtain the training they need to obtain a position in a professional orchestra? One way, available in the USA for distinguished music graduates only, is by auditioning for entry into the New World Symphony (established 1987) at Miami Beach, a youth orchestra that receives massive private sponsorship and is intended as an industry feeder. It offers innovative educational programs (including internet teaching),\(^ {82}\) three-year funded scholarships, travel expenses, and a graduate program. The New World Symphony’s concerts of canonic and new works are presented under high-profile conductors and with international soloists. It allows participants to design and present their own concerts, including rare works with unusual instrumentation; and its mentoring program pairs participants with emerging high school students, culminating in ‘side-by-side’ concerts. Presenting its annual Season at Miami Beach’s Lincoln Hall, it has performed many world and US orchestral and chamber music premieres; hundreds of its graduates have obtained positions in leading orchestras around the world.\(^ {83}\)

Another path to a professional orchestral career is for a player to participate in residential short course seminars or camps that usually last three to six weeks, some of which are presented in conjunction with a music festival. Prominent professional musicians run master-classes and ensemble rehearsals and offer optional private tuition leading to concert presentations. In the USA these include the Aspen Music Festival (for college-age players plus select pre-eighteens), Boston University Tanglewood Institute (BUTI, for ages fifteen plus), the Levine School of Music (in Washington DC) and the Brevard Music Center (in Brevard, North Carolina). The latter offers instrumental, small ensemble, orchestral, tuition, concerto competition, piano accompaniment and composition programs, with some scholarships.

Perhaps the best-known British short course seminar is the bi-annual International Musicians’ Seminar at Prussia Cove in Cornwall for sixteen to thirty-year olds. Prussia Cove accepts musicians on the basis of recorded auditions and offers travel bursaries funded through repeat concerts in London, charity support, friends’ fundraisers and donations. Costs are also kept to a minimum by using volunteers. In Switzerland, the UBS Verbier Festival Orchestra was set up in 2000 to audition world-wide (except South America) annually for pre-professional young players who train for eight weeks with fine conductors and soloists and present concerts at the Festival or on international tours. Located in a Swiss Alps resort, the festival’s international orchestra-in-residence was founded by a visionary conductor, James Levine, Music Director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera.

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\(^ {80}\) Ireland joined the EEC (now known as the European Union) in 1973.

\(^ {81}\) Fergus Sheils, verbal comm., July 2005.

\(^ {82}\) NWS’s conductor is Michael Tilson Thomas. Its internet technologies enable orchestras and universities to engage in master classes, seminars and rehearsals by ‘remote exchange’. See <www.nws.edu>.

\(^ {83}\) Interview with David Griffiths at Monash University, April 2006.
All these camps and festivals lead to their participants’ concert presentations of standard and new repertoire, but they usually exclude works for particularly large forces. As discussed in the second article in this volume, Australia offers a unique combination of training programs at its annual National Music Camps and in the Australian Youth Orchestra’s two annual Seasons, players from which usually also perform a combination of standard, contemporary and Australian repertoire, though at times they present big works for large choir and orchestra as well.

The AYO’s Orchestral Fellowship program assists young players on the cusp of a performance career. They sit side by side with a professional player in rehearsals to learn the details of the craft and are sometimes able to play in the orchestra’s concerts, which in some cases leads to their obtaining a seat and career in their own right.

**Debates about Repertoire**

Under what conditions should youth orchestras program big, ‘blockbuster’ works that feature a large cast of players and singers in their repertoire? Debates about youth orchestras’ choices of repertoire are perennial.\(^\text{84}\) Some stakeholders argue that young ensembles should not follow over-ambitious paths: that youth orchestras lack the maturity needed to tackle major late-Romantic works requiring large forces. Instead, they say, youth orchestras should restrict their repertoire to standard orchestral works, knowledge of which is indispensable for students wishing to become professional orchestral players.\(^\text{85}\)

Recently the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland chose to play the whole of Richard Wagner’s tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Dublin. The Australian Youth Orchestra programmed Arnold Schoenberg’s gigantic cantata *Gurrelieder* in Perth,\(^\text{86}\) and three years later it gave a concert performance of Richard Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* in Brisbane.\(^\text{87}\) All three performances were received to critical acclaim; some former detractors conceded afterwards that maturity of playing is not the only issue to be considered in choosing such works to play. Reasons given in favour of this view were that such big works are especially inspiring to their players at an impressionable age, that the young players may at best have the opportunity to play them only once or twice in a lifetime, that audiences appreciate the rare opportunity to hear the works, that they lend a festive atmosphere to arts festivals and other important events; indeed, that they are memorable for all involved. In addition, some argued that ‘blockbuster works’ are particularly suited to youth orchestras as they can perform them more cost-effectively than paid orchestras.

Especially for large youth orchestras, choice of repertoire is primarily determined by orchestration. Many works played by the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, for example, are symphonic works scored for full forces of wind, brass and percussion, so as to employ all its 120 to 130 players. They play only a few classical

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84 See also David Pear’s article, in this volume.

85 One influential proponent of this view is John Hopkins, founder of New Zealand’s national youth orchestra and long-time conductor of the Australian Youth Orchestra (interview, August 2004).

86 Arnold Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder* of 1913 calls for large vocal and orchestral forces, including six solo singers, three four-part men’s choirs, an eight-part mixed choir and a huge orchestra of twenty-five woodwinds, twenty-five brass, sixteen percussion and eighty-four strings.

87 This performance, presented at the Queensland Music Festival in Brisbane in May 2005, was awarded one of the two Helpmann Awards (established by Live Music Australia in 2002) for the Best Classical Concert Presentation in 2005.
era works because they mostly lack trombone and tuba parts. Mainly for practical reasons, its conductor Gere Flint rejects ‘big works’ such as Gurrelieder because the concert hall stage used in Atlanta lacks space for extra singers. He also rejects orchestral reductions choosing only works that professional orchestras play (such as Mahler’s Symphony No. 1), and including twentieth-century works (such as Varèse’s Ionisation for 13 percussion players). Some youth orchestras pay only nominal attention to new music, arguing that audiences prefer older, better-known music, while others, including AYO and several of the Australian state-based youth orchestras, have developed commissioning programs that also allow musicians to interact with composers in rehearsing and performing new works.

Conclusion
Over the course of the twentieth century, youth orchestras have become a major industry in many countries. Usually supported by relatively small administrative teams who may organise a range of educational and performance programs, the orchestras draw their players from a cluster of nation-states, a nation-state, a province or state, a regional or rural area, a city, a suburban area, or an educational institution. Some freestanding youth orchestras are formally attached to a leading professional orchestra, while others work with professional orchestras for certain projects. Governments employ youth orchestras to celebrate national and international events, with some orchestras receiving public funding, while others depend on private funding, and yet others on mixed public and private sector funding, usually with parents paying fees and with volunteers donating their labour and other support.

Youth orchestras play an increasingly important role in the music industry, because they attract good-sized audiences and because of the freshness and perceived youthful vitality of their playing. Moreover, because the players are not paid (on the contrary, they mostly pay fees for their participation) their concert ticket prices are affordable to most prospective audience members.

Institutional youth orchestras, especially those in famous institutions such as Finland’s national Sibelius Academy of Music, share many of the attributes of the freestanding ones, including the enthusiasm, the problems, the programs and the tours. However, a difference lies in the fact that their student members are normally required to play in them as a compulsory part of their course.

The stakeholders in a youth orchestra generally adhere to a view of its identity. This may be based on the goals listed in its mission statement or charter, but it often also includes other tangible factors, including its ensemble size (ranging from around thirty to 130 players), its age limits (around eight to thirty years), its pool of players, its range of educational and performance programs, its professional tutors’ and conductors’ pedigrees, its members’ awareness of its place and history, and its attitude to equity of access to its programs. Identity is also partly governed by the amount of available funding, which determines the number of players, choice of conductors and tutors, touring and other activities, quantity and quality of administrators employed, and the extent to which an orchestra needs to rely on alumnus, parent body or volunteer assistant support. Playing quality, which is by nature too variable and subjectively assessed to be regarded as a tangible factor of identity, can nevertheless be said to be related to the particular orchestra players’ age and experience, the size and nature of the player pool, the choice of repertoire, and the approach and the length of time a conductor has stayed with an orchestra.
Participants in most youth orchestral organisations in Europe, North America and Australasia are of white, middle-class, urban backgrounds. Some youth orchestras that are aware of their young cohorts’ inequity of opportunity on racial, class and regional/rural geographical grounds organise programs to promote greater equity, but many youth orchestras’ charters and mission statements make no mention of equity issues and do not, or cannot afford to, deal with them. Most players in youth orchestras in Latin American, Asian, African and other countries where Western classical music does not dominate are, of course, locals, but these players, too, are mostly of middle class backgrounds, except in special cases like the Venezuela Youth Orchestra, which has special programs to include materially poor participants. Some youth orchestras, especially internationally-based ones, adhere to an idealistic socio-political as well as a musical platform.

Clearly youth orchestras play a far-reaching role in the musical life of the communities they serve. Their players are seen to acquire habits of disciplined practice, gain confidence in performance and develop problem-solving skills, and learn how to manage stress and to think creatively, skills that flow over into everyday life and business. Indeed, many players are all-round high achievers. Throughout the world, the youth orchestra movement has brought the enjoyment of group creative achievement to many young artists and special artistic experiences to audiences. It is an important means of transmitting Western orchestral music across the generations.

Acknowledgements

This article is based mainly on interviews with youth orchestra players, tutors, conductors, administrators, parents and volunteers, field notes, correspondence, press cuttings, CD recordings of youth orchestra concerts, and brochures gathered during field research in Europe (Ireland, Holland, Germany, Russia and Finland), USA (Atlanta) and Australia in 2004–06 and deposited in the Music Archives at Monash University. Highlights of my trip to Europe were interviews with Aila Sauramo, Miika Asunta, Timo Veijola, Hannu Norjanen, Géza and Csaba Szilvay, Tibor Bognani, Leif Segerstam, and Juhani Poutanen in Helsinki; Ludmila Milchakova in St Petersburg; Rowena Crouch and AYO tour players Eve Silver, Charlotte Roberts, Anton Bobenko and Damien Eckersby in London; Arthur van Dijk in Amsterdam; Cornelia Wilde and Stanley Dodds in Berlin; Joanna Crooks in Dublin; and Agnes O’Kane, Rosina Joyce and Candace Whitehead in Cork. The life stories told me by three Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) alumnae: Claire Edwardes (now a freelance percussionist in professional orchestras in Amsterdam), Monica Grosman (Concertgebouw member) in Amsterdam and Lisa Grosman (member of the Irish Chamber Orchestra) in Dublin attributed their success in obtaining a position in a prestigious European orchestra in part to their AYO experience. I also interviewed Stanley Dobbs, an Australian member of the Berlin Philharmonic who is a regular tutor in the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester. Thanks to Joy Tonks, Brigid O’Meeghan and Pascale Parenteau who gave me thoughtful oral and written information about the history of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra National Youth Orchestra. In Atlanta, Gere Flint and his administrative team were also most helpful. A grant from the Australian Research Council with the AYO as industry partner made this research possible.
The Australian Youth Orchestra Inc.: Its Identity as a National Icon and Expansion of its Performance and Educational Programs

Margaret Kartomi

This article explores the identity of the Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) as a national cultural symbol and the role of the company of which it is part (AYO Inc.) in the transmission of orchestral music performance over the past fifty years. It examines the progressive expansion of the company’s performance and educational programs from its beginnings as a national music camp, its maintenance of a highly competitive national audition process, the role of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in the AYO’s activities, the orchestra’s national and international touring, and its recognition and funding by government as a national icon. A study of the origins, development and rationale of its programs since 1948 indicates that AYO Inc. has responded innovatively to specific Australian needs and has constantly monitored the relationship between its educational philosophy and the implementation of its programs, which government requires the orchestra to continually self-assess. Research is based on extensive field interviews with participants, observers, and administrative and music staff at a range of AYO Inc. programs between 2004 and 2006 and supplementary archival sources.

According to its Vision Statement, AYO Inc. is an arts training company that administers Australia’s national youth orchestra, and its programs, as a part of the transmission of classical music across generations of Australians. Its five stated objectives are: (i) to empower ‘generations of young people with musical knowledge and instill in them a deep commitment to employ those skills, thereby enriching the cultural development of Australia;’ (ii) to ‘provide professional leadership to enable young Australian musicians to expand and extend their orchestral and ensemble experience and to realise their potential through national and international

1 The Vision Statement is contained in AYO Inc.’s Strategic Plan. It is a constantly evolving document, developed over the past decade by staff in strategic planning sessions, and with input from the Board of Directors.

training programs and performance of the highest quality'; (iii) to 'create opportunities whereby young musicians work, perform, and interact with music professionals so as to be influenced by their [professional musicians'] standards, practice and performance, and benefit from pathways to professional careers'; (iv) 'to promote increased awareness and appreciation of Australian music by encouraging young Australian composers and instrumentalists, and the performance of Australian music'; and (v) to 'promote and practice equality of opportunity in, and access to, AYO programs and selection processes, including overcoming financial and geographical barriers to participation'.

This article explores the national identity and role of the AYO and the company of which it is part (AYO Incorporated) in the transmission of orchestral music in Australia over the past half-century. As the only orchestra that auditions its players from young musicians across the whole nation, and which normally engages in annual national or international tours and recording sessions, it has acquired a pre-eminent reputation for performance quality. Until recently it was also the only full-size symphony orchestra to be chosen by the federal government to represent Australia on important national and international occasions. Generations of Australia’s professional musicians acquired their first taste of playing in a full orchestra with a fine conductor in AYO’s concert seasons or tours. For many young people it was a life-changing experience; for some it made them decide that their future career path would be that of a professional musician.

The article also traces the progressive expansion of the educational philosophy and programs of the National Music Camp (NMC), the Australian Youth Orchestra (which initially formed part of NMC), and their development as a national cultural symbol under the name of AYO Inc. It aims to show how this consistently self-monitoring organisation and its flagship orchestra—AYO—has responded innovatively to the country’s changing social, cultural and economic conditions. The Commonwealth government supports AYO Inc. as an arts training company that has nurtured many ‘musicians now playing in Australia’s professional orchestras’, chooses AYO to represent Australia on noteworthy occasions, and continues to take pride in the ‘Australian-ness’ of its participants and staff and its inclusion of Australian repertoire.

NMC/AYO has changed its name three times: from the National Music Camp (NMC, founded in 1948) to the National Music Camp Association (NMCA) in 1951, to Youth Music Australia (YMA) in 1993 and, finally, to AYO Inc. in 2000. That it draws its players from the nation’s pool of young musicians allows it to claim that its performance quality is higher than orchestras drawing from a smaller pool.

Not all countries, of course, have a national youth orchestra. Countries that do, such as Australia and New Zealand, tend to regard them as a reflection of the music-educational, artistic and other achievements of the nation as a whole; in short, they appeal to and express national pride. Many people are passionate about the identity of ‘their’ own national youth orchestra, just as they are about some other groups to which they may attach their allegiance, such as sports, dance and chess teams.

2 For a discussion on identity, see pp. 17–23, ‘Youth Orchestras in the Global Scene,’ in this volume.
3 The Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras and the Australian Chamber Orchestra have shared this honour with AYO in recent years.
4 The Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, quoted in Australian Youth Orchestra 2007 [Program Booklet] (Sydney: AYO Inc., 2007) 5.
Sources
This article is based on (i) archival data deposited in the National Library of Australia; (ii) a post-1993 database, files, press cuttings and memorabilia kept in AYO Inc.’s Sydney offices; and (iii) field work interviews undertaken in 2003–2006 by David Pear and myself at the national music camps, the AYO Seasons in 2004–2006 (including rehearsals, concerts, and international tours), the Young Australian Concert Artists Program, the Young Symphonists Program, and the Fellowships programs. It also draws on sound recordings of key AYO performances between 1959 and 2005 from a pair of compact discs issued by AYO Inc. on the ABC Classics label in 2007. The research methodology is qualitative rather than quantitative, seeking orally transmitted and written information, rather than numerical data, making multiple comparisons between data from interviews, interpreting and classifying the data into categories, and then breaking them down into smaller parts. Much of the data provided in in-depth interviews have been analysed by comparing and classifying the interviewees’ stories and anecdotes over the past fifty years. The analyses enabled core themes and links between the categories of data to be identified and narrative accounts of aspects of the company’s history to be written, though the narratives and interview details are being published elsewhere. They also assisted in piecing together the main elements of the company’s educational philosophy and policy.

Educational Philosophy and Approach
As mentioned in its vision statement, AYO Inc. aims to ‘empower young Australians with musical knowledge and instil in them a deep commitment to employ those skills, thereby enriching the cultural development of Australian society’. The company holds that the best available professional musicians and conductors need to be employed to tutor, mentor and conduct performances by the students, who must be nourished as

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5 The 1948–1993 archives contain correspondence, annual lists of program participants, concert programs, tour schedules, concert recordings, photographs, artwork, memorabilia, press criticisms, annual spreadsheets listing details of all student participants from 1993 onwards, and data on national trends in the supply of instrumentalists in each of Australia’s orchestra sections.

6 The field data includes our transcripts, notes and/or recordings of interviews with hundreds of stakeholders from among AYO Inc.’s tutors and conductors, current and former students, parents and friends, members of the AYO Inc. Board of Directors, private sponsors, and members of the music industry, who gave their views about many aspects of the company’s identity.

7 Pear and Kartomi conducted interviews at the National Music Camps held at the Canberra School of Music in 2004 and 2006 and the School of Music—Conservatorium at Monash University in 2005, and were present at AYO Season rehearsals and concerts in 2004–2006, for example, at AYO’s rehearsals and performance of Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde in the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in 2005, and at other programs, including the Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA) program at Coffs Harbour (NSW) in 2004, and the Young Symphonists in Adelaide in 2005. We also attended other programs and meetings, including AYO Inc.’s end-of-year Board Meetings. See also Pear’s article, this volume.

8 Pear and Kartomi interviewed twelve conductors, thirty-four professional musician-tutors, over 100 student participants and six administrators at the camps, seasons and tour performances; eighteen stakeholders in the YACA and Young Instrumentalists programs; three General Managers (Jo Parkes, Tony Grybowski and Colin Cornish); eight members of AYO Inc.’s Board of Management; six members and three former members of the AYO Inc. administrative team; and ten parents, friends and other volunteers. They spoke informally to members of the audience in the Albert Hall, London, after AYO’s 2004 appearance at the BBC Proms, in Brisbane at the 2005 Tristan und Isolde performance, and at a YACA concert at Coffs Harbour in 2004. The Monash University Ethics Committee requires that interviewees’ names be suppressed unless their written permission is given, moreover many did not wish their names to be published, so only a few names of stakeholders are provided. Recordings and some transcripts of interviews are stored in the confidential archives of Monash University’s School of Music—Conservatorium.

9 The album is entitled Celebrating Fifty Years of the Australian Youth Orchestra, ABC Classics CD No. 4765919.

10 For example, in Margaret Kartomi, ‘A Response to Two Problems in Music Education: The Young Australian Concert Artists Program of the Australian Youth Orchestra,’ Music Education Research (forthcoming).
individuals and in musical groups. Their concert performances should be held only in venues judged to be acoustically and aesthetically pleasing. Moreover, whenever possible, some works by Australian composers should be rehearsed and performed in the presence of the composer. The philosophy is also in accord with the federal government’s non-partisan requirement on providing equal opportunity for young musicians wherever they live and whatever their means.

The educational philosophy of AYO Inc. is also apparent in the terminology used in the company’s self-descriptions and self-assessments. As its main publicity brochure in 2006 explains, the company accepts ‘aspiring young artists’ with ‘talent and commitment’ in its programs in order to develop their ‘musicality’ and ‘complement their current instrumental tuition’. Through students’ exposure to professional musicians who tutor their sections and conduct their performances, the company aims to build on the ‘talent’ and ‘musicality’ of the nationally selected candidates, to increase their musical skills and knowledge and prepare them for the challenges of public orchestral performance.

The terms ‘musicality’ and ‘talent’ have been discussed by educationists and musicologists in the literature over the past two decades. ‘Musicality’ is defined as the result of ‘collections of encounters and choices: pastiches of performances [that people] have experienced, the lessons they have taken, the people with whom they have played . . . and the technical and cognitive limitations of their own musicianship’. Some argue that the dominant Western view of talent is the opposite of the view held in other cultures, where everyone, not just those deemed ‘talented’, is capable of musical performance. To say that a student from a small class is talented is usually intended as a compliment and a mark of individuality, but in a larger class at a tertiary conservatorium or in a national youth orchestra where all students are regarded as ‘having talent’, it can become a mark of similarity. Given this and other problems of the term, Gagne suggested that ‘talent’ be differentiated from ‘giftedness’. As talent implies the possession not only of aptitude but also developed skills, ‘talent’ should be used in the sense of ‘an ability to produce an exceptional performance,’ while ‘giftedness’ should be used to denote ‘innate abilities’ and above-average competence.

As AYO’s philosophy holds, and most of its tutors stress, players in an orchestra or other ensemble need to relate to each other socially as well as musically, thus the programs give the young players opportunities for social interaction. By getting to know each other personally, most students can interact with each other more effectively on the musical level as well. The inclusion of social activities in the programs is thought to build up self-confidence and emotional maturity, qualities which are transferable to the students’ playing and to other aspects of their lives.

Professional tutors and conductors employed to implement AYO Inc.’s stated educational goals clearly vary in their methods. However, as attested by their interviews with our team and the large files of written tutors’ reports, most tutors see themselves as contributing effectively to the company’s overriding goal, which is

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11 A more extensively-argued account of AYO’s educational philosophy in relation to one of its programs is presented in Kartomi, ‘A Response to Two Problems in Music Education.’
to offer students very high-quality rehearsal and performance experiences in such a way as to enhance their musical competence, musicality, and social self-confidence.

As I aim to show below, over the decades the organisation has been able progressively to expand its performance and educational programs. It came to be recognised as a national symbol and, through eventually obtaining ongoing government as well as private funding, changed its whole outlook and mode of operation.

The Changing Notion of Identity of NMC/AYO

How did the collective notion of the identity of NMC/AYO develop among its stakeholders? Like any comparable organisation, the key players in its development can be portrayed as a triangulated structure of relationships. As shown in Figure 1, the notion of the company’s collective identity first began to develop, in part, among the parents and friends who supported the vision and enthusiasm of its founders. As there was initially no formal organising structure, it was the parents and friends who provided the earliest support for the young players, tutors and voluntary organisers, not only by transporting their children to rehearsals, camps and concerts and by helping organise the camps and social activity and raising funds, but also by serving as the employers of the second group of stakeholders in the diagram—the private instrumental teachers who train the young people to play their instruments before and while playing in the youth orchestra(s) which they support.

Figure 1. Factors determining the developing notion of collective identity of the AYO Inc.
The two-way relationships between the next three stakeholder groups in Figure 1—the student players, senior management/administrators, and the professional tutors and conductors—are crucial in the production of the outcomes. It is the interplay between these three groups that provides the core dynamic for shaping the collective sense of identity. Another two groups of stakeholders consist of the concert and media audiences, and the music journalists who write concert press reviews. They witness the results of the weeks or months of pedagogical and artistic interaction between the students, tutors and administrators, who between them present the fresh, vital youth orchestra performances that audiences have learned to expect.

The last two groups of stakeholders—sponsors from the public and private sectors—help ensure the continuity of the organisation’s activities over the years. Their material and moral support results from an orchestra’s reputation for high quality performance and its young members’ roles as current artists and future music leaders and educators.

The history of a youth orchestra depends on the specific interactions between its groups of stakeholders (plus other groups in some cases). Some of those interactions in the following historical overview of NMC/AYO will be referred to only briefly below, for reasons of space, and only as they have affected the changing constructs of its identity.

**Historical Development**

Discussion of the origins, development and rationale of AYO Inc.’s programs may be divided into five periods, based mainly on (i) data that Pear and I gathered from interviews with stakeholders between 2003 and 2006; (ii) a reading of AYO archive files; and (iii) stories about the early national music camps and formation of AYO that I heard at the Elder Conservatorium of the University of Adelaide between 1958 and 1963 from my former professor, NMC co-founder John Bishop, other staff, and student participants at the Conservatorium.  

AYO Inc.’s core programs, which will be discussed below, are presented in Figure 2. Though many individuals made important contributions to the company and the development of its programs, space will allow mention of only the most outstanding ones.

### 1948 to 1957

As noted in the first article in this volume, youth orchestras have quite frequently been created by one or two visionary individuals, and the NMC/AYO orchestras were no exception. The founders of Australia’s national music camp, and eventually of its national flagship youth orchestra, were two idealistic musicians and teachers who happened to meet and decide that young orchestral musicians from across Australia needed to be given the opportunity to play together regularly at youth orchestral camps, receiving the necessary aural and technical training in all aspects of music, and creating from among them professional musicians for the nation’s orchestras.

These pioneers were an American musician and teacher, Ruth D. Alexander (née Kurtz, b. 1914 in Kansas, d. 1999), who had migrated to Australia in 1943 and taught music at a school in Melbourne, and a South Australian pianist, conductor, music educator and professor of music at the University of Adelaide, John Bishop.

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14 For the period 1948 to 1983, some of the data is taken from or corroborated by Epstein’s *Concert Pitch*. 
Figure 2. AYO’s core annual educational and performance programs
Bishop and Alexander arranged national auditions and founded the National Music Camp (NMC), in a former army camp at Point Lonsdale (Victoria) in 1948, supported financially and in-kind by the National Fitness Council and the Victorian School Music Association. Adapting the structure of the USA’s first national music camp held in Interlochen, Michigan in 1928, it included a mix of musical, sporting and social activity in the program. The founders insisted on two-week camps to balance orchestral rehearsals and performances, sport, to help students develop their physical coordination, and recreation, for a balanced lifestyle. With Bishop serving as music director and conductor, NMC employed the finest available professional musicians (sometimes including an international soloist) to perform, conduct and/or tutor at the camps (see Figure 3).

From early on, NMC, and later the AYO itself, gradually incorporated and expanded a notion of national identity as they received a boost from Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) funding, as well as in-kind assistance and limited private funding that helped offset the cost of many of their endeavours. The ABC’s professional symphony orchestras in the various states released musicians to tutor at the camps, provided the youth orchestras with professional performers and conductors on occasion, arranged broadcasting and recording sessions, and publicised the concert performances at the camps and in AYO Seasons. At the first camp, a student association was formed to help plan for the year of events until a formal body could be established. At the second, Ronald Maslyn Williams (1911–1999), a founding member of NMCA who remained involved in it all his life, made an influential prize-winning documentary film entitled ‘Music Camp’ which was to be shown in Australia and at festivals in Europe in 1951 and at the time helped attract migrants to Australia, some of whose children later joined in the camps and AYO.

In the year after the sixth camp in 1955, the National Music Camp Association (NMCA) was founded as a private, non-profit organisation under John Bishop’s direction, and over the next few decades it organised

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15 Many music students at the University of Adelaide, including myself, found Professor Bishop to be an inspiring teacher, pianist, conductor, and musical leader. Indeed, as the founder and main leader of NMC/AYO and the Director of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide (1948–1964), Bishop profoundly influenced two generations of young students. He was also the prime mover behind Adelaide’s Festival of Arts, serving as its artistic director at the first festivals (in 1960, 1962 and 1964), and leaving a legacy that influences the festivals to this day. See Christopher Symons, *John Bishop: A Life for Music* (Melbourne: Hyland Press, 1989) 179–250 for an account of the effect Bishop had on the music scene of Victoria, then South Australia, indeed, the whole nation.


17 Alexander introduced Bishop to her friend the influential music educator Joseph Maddy, who had organised the first American national summer music camp at Interlochen in 1928. In 1952 Bishop was very impressed when he visited the camp, which had been taken over by the University of Michigan and employed Maddy all year round to run it (Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 32).

18 Bishop and Alexander are shown in this 1958 photo with two leading Australian musicians: Lindley Evans, who served NMC in various capacities, including as a member of the 1962 committee, piano tutor and host of the 1955 camp, camp director in 1956–57, 1959, 1962 and 1965, and patron in 1983 (Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 38, 42–43, 61–62, 169), and Ernest Llewellyn, leader of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, who was (among other duties) involved in NMC as guest artist in 1955, director of a chamber music festival organised by NMCA in 1958, and camp orchestra conductor in 1965 (Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 42–43, 55–57).

19 The ABC contributed in other ways as well. A number of finalists and winners in the ABC Concerto Competitions were former NMC participants. Moreover the competitions provided a steady supply of young soloists for AYO performances. Len Amadio, verbal comm., June 2004.

20 Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 22. Maslyn Williams was senior producer in the Commonwealth Film Unit, Canberra. The film gained the Jubilee Award at Australia’s first film festival (Olinda Festival) in 1951 and an award from Jeunesses Musicales; technically it was a remarkable achievement in the days before sound synchronization and hand-held cameras had been developed.

21 The company’s Certificate of Incorporation was issued on 29 June 1956.
the annual summer music camps in different states. Its educational policy was still to combine sporting and social activities with intensive daily music rehearsals leading up to public orchestral and chamber music performances in order to develop the students’ musical competences, musicality, and ensemble interaction as orchestral musicians.

Bishop divided the camp students according to their musical aptitude and competences into a senior and a junior orchestra, choosing more difficult repertoire to play for the former than for the latter. Bishop found he had sometimes to fight the parochial attitudes of music teachers in some towns and cities and encourage them to think nationally. He and Alexander persuaded educational institutions and parents to plan ahead so that their students could travel to the camps, breaking down barriers and cross-institutional jealousies in the process. Determined that the camp should not become an imposition on the tutors’ and students’ families, they also scheduled the camps in the school summer holidays and encouraged the families to join in the activities. A special orchestra was even formed for the children of staff at the camp; one year it accompanied a memorable children’s opera performance. The many volunteer-helpers lent the camps a warm family atmosphere, remaining a mainstay of the camps for decades to come.

On Bishop’s death in 1964, the senior orchestra was named the Bishop Orchestra and the junior one the Alexander Orchestra, names that persist to the time of writing, though the two orchestras are now approximately equal in standing, playing different repertoire of similar standard.

Interview with Rosanne (Rosie) Hunt (15 March 2006), professional cellist and veteran of many NMCs and AYOs, who told me stories about this orchestra and gave me a vinyl disc of the opera called How to Get Ahead without Really Trying (composer unknown), which has been transferred at Monash University to DVD and presented to the AYO Inc.’s Archive. The opera was originally produced by Warrnambool Recording Enterprises under the label ‘Tower Hill’.

**Figure 3.** From left, John Bishop, Lindley Evans, Ruth Alexander and Ernest Llewellyn at the National Music Camp, St Peters College, Adelaide, in 1958. (Photograph courtesy of AYO, with permission.)
Most of my interviewees who described the early camp years had enthusiastic memories of their camp experiences: honing their ensemble interaction skills, developing their musical competence and making long-term friendships with fellow players that in some cases lasted a lifetime. Contacts made among the network of students, tutors, conductors and administrators often assisted the students’ developing careers, they asserted, whether in music, teaching, business, medicine, law or other fields. Some attended camps several years in a row, while others attended only once.

Despite the relative lack of a philanthropic tradition in Australia, the National Music Camp Association (NMCA) succeeded in attracting some private donations. Yet the camps and concert seasons were generally run on minimal funding and had to rely heavily on the time and goodwill of staff, administrators, students, parents and friends. Playing standards were reportedly uneven, and members of the second orchestra felt they were second-class musicians, though a few managed to graduate into the first orchestra at a later date.

In 1957, nine years after the first camp was held, it became possible for NMCA to form a national orchestra—AYO—for young auditioned players aged eighteen to twenty-five years. This resulted from increases in state and private funding, the growing musical competence and ensemble interaction skills of the first camp orchestra, and the growth in the national consciousness of the young players’ achievements. The organisation could also provide disadvantaged students who were successful in the national auditions with some assistance toward travel and living costs in Sydney as they prepared for AYO’s debut concert performance.

On 2 March 1957, the interstate students selected to play in the newly formed AYO were met by their host families at Sydney’s central railway station. They rehearsed intensively under John Bishop’s baton for their first major, ticketed performance to a capacity audience in the Sydney Town Hall on the evening of 9 March, having prepared the way by presenting an afternoon tea concert at the David Jones Emporium on 6 March and a concert for school children on 7 March. Henceforth, Bishop alternated with other professional musicians in directing the camps and conducting AYO’s annual season of concerts. One of the conductors was from the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s Victorian Symphony Orchestra, Sir Bernard Heinze, who was appointed the director of the camp in 1952 and first conducted AYO in 1959. Some members of the first AYO remained involved in the youth orchestra movement as tutors or administrators for many years to come.

In 2003, the Monash University research team tried to quantify these links and their influence on careers of former campers, but had to conclude that, almost six decades after the first camp was held, the lack of systematically collected data made such an exercise impossible.

Anne Gilby, verbal comm., April 2003.
Interview with Rosanne Hunt, 15 March 2006.

The upper age limit for players in AYO has varied over the years. In the first decade after its debut concert it stabilised at twenty-two years. In 2004–2006 it is twenty-five years. Age limits for AYO Inc.’s subsidiary programs vary; for example, the Young Symphonists string orchestra program is for students aged twelve to seventeen, and the chamber music program from eighteen to twenty-five years.

The concert, advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald, was presented by AYO in conjunction with the ABC and featured Mozart’s Piano Concerto no. 23, the first two movements of Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, the suite from Handel’s Royal Fireworks Music, and the Prelude from Wagner’s Die Meistersinger. See concert advertisement reproduced in Epstein, Concert Pitch 61.

In The First Fifty Years: The Australian Youth Orchestra 1957–2007, notes in CD booklet, ABC Classics, 2007, 6, Vincent Plush describes AYO’s performance at David Jones on 6 March 1957 as AYO’s ‘debut’, while Epstein describes it as AYO’s ‘world premiere’ (Epstein, Concert Pitch 62). Arguably AYO’s first full debut was the concert on 9 March, a copy of the advertisement for which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 4 March 1957 (reproduced in Epstein, Concert Pitch 61).

Epstein, Concert Pitch 77–78.

For example, a student in the first AYO, Peter Seymour, became the director and conductor of NMC and then Chairman of the NMCA, and also conductor of the Sydney Youth Orchestra in the 1970s (Epstein, Concert Pitch 94, 111).
Once the national music camp tradition had been established and AYO had given its debut performance, NMC—and AYO within it—were able to focus on their further development as a national body, with the ABC providing conductors, soloists and repertoire and NMC bearing the cost of auditioning, travel and accommodation of the players from across the nation. From 1958, AYO’s nationally auditioned young musicians met for rehearsals and presented one or two seasons of high profile concerts each year in prestigious concert halls in different Australian cities. Prominent conductors such as Thomas Matthews (1965), Moshe Atzmon (1971) and Willem van Otterloo (1967) were invited to choose the repertoire and conduct the concerts around Australia, and sectional tutors were selected from among the country’s best professional musicians. AYO’s first overseas soloist (at its second season in Melbourne in 1958) was Daniel Barenboim, the fifteen-year old Argentine-born pianist who performed the Grieg Piano Concerto with AYO in 1958. He returned to play Beethoven’s Emperor Piano Concerto with AYO in 1962.

While John Bishop was overseas, the Victorian Symphony Orchestra’s conductor Sir Bernard Heinze (who was director of NMC in 1952) conducted AYO’s appearance at the ABC Youth Series in Sydney in

33 Atzmon and Otterloo were chief conductors of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra when engaged by AYO.
34 Barenboim has been active in the youth orchestra scene for most of his life, eventually joining Edward Said to set up his own: see Ben Etherington’s article, this volume.
and continued to do so in 1961 and 1962. In 1960, AYO had appeared at Adelaide’s first Festival of Arts, another dream of John Bishop which had been brought to fruition. When John Bishop died in 1964, Dr Percy Jones (1914–1992) led the organisation for the next seven years. Despite financial constraints, it mounted annual seasons in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, including in its repertoire new Australian works such as Richard Meale’s Japanese-inspired Images (Nagauta) in 1966, thus foreshadowing AYO’s involvement in the developing youth orchestral scene in Asia from 1970.

British-born John Hopkins was another music educator and conductor who made an indelible impact on the development of national music camp and AYO. He was first invited to conduct the orchestras at the national music camp and AYO Season in 1961. At that time he was still the resident principal conductor of the National Orchestra of New Zealand and its Broadcasting Service, and had just set up the associated National Youth Orchestra of New Zealand in 1959. After moving to Australia in 1963 to take up his appointment as Director of Music for the ABC, he frequently conducted AYO and NMC concerts, including those that AYO presented on its first international tour. Hopkins believed that youth orchestras in Australia—as in New Zealand—should essentially serve as training bodies, members of which should be treated like professional orchestral players. He taught orchestral techniques that students had never encountered with their solo-focused private teachers, such as learning to ‘up the bow’ rather than using the upper part of the down-bow. Recordings demonstrating Hopkins’s orchestral string ‘sound’ are included in the CD set, Celebrating Fifty Years of AYO.

Hopkins’s treatment of national music camp participants as if they were professionals matched the increasingly serious attitude that students were taking to their music making in the 1960s. They spent less time on recreation and more on practising and rehearsing. Ruth Alexander attributed this trend to the impact of European musical immigrant teachers at the camps along with their seriously musical-minded children. By 1968 a large number of them were playing in the camp orchestras.

1970 to 1992

In the 1970s, the Commonwealth government was becoming increasingly aware of AYO’s value as a cultural ambassador and national symbol, choosing it in 1970 as the orchestra that would represent Australia at Expo ’70 in Osaka. Thus, provided with generous funding, AYO made its first international tour, to Japan and the Philippines, where it was invited to play at various diplomatic events. Meanwhile a new emphasis on Australian nationalism and a greater awareness of Australia’s location in Asia were beginning to burgeon in

Information in this paragraph is drawn mainly from my interview with John Hopkins in Melbourne in April 2005.

For example, Hopkins conducted AYO’s performances of Grétry’s ‘Pantomime’ from Zémire et Azor on CD 1, track 7, Handel’s ‘The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba’ from Solomon on CD 1, track 1, and Delius’s ‘Intermezzo and Serenade’ from Hassan on CD 1, track 3.

The tour was followed by a period of increasing financial confidence. The NMCA set up its Board of Trustees, having received a large grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation, which enabled it to buy scores and equipment previously lent by tertiary conservatoriums (Epstein, Concert Pitch 74). In 1974, a full-time professional administrator (Len Porter) was appointed, along with an orchestral manager (Margaret Greene, who later became a council member) (Epstein, Concert Pitch 128–29).
On the one hand, the NMCA/AYO was laying greater emphasis on performing Australian and new music (such as Peter Sculthorpe’s *Music for Japan* at Expo ’70) and in assisting or collaborating with young Australian composers, inviting several of them each year to take part in the camps and to try out their work with the camp orchestras. On the other hand, the organisation was becoming involved in the growing orchestral culture of some northeast and southeast Asian countries.

With increased government funding from 1974, the organisation could afford an office and some staff. It ran its second Asian tour to the Philippines, Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong five years later, with very large audiences in attendance. In 1976–77, Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs provided financial assistance to students from Southeast Asia to take part in Australia’s national music camp. As a result of discussions with Filipino and other Asian leaders who had assisted AYO’s Asian tours in 1970 and 1975, the association’s senior management worked to help develop a series of youth orchestra camps in some Asian countries.

In 1974, Ruth Alexander retired and Len Porter ran the organisation from Adelaide as its first full-time administrator under Peter Seymour’s chairmanship. Twenty years after John Bishop’s death, in 1984, the AYO fulfilled his dream that it perform at the Edinburgh Festival, on which John Bishop had modelled the Adelaide Festival of Arts. The first Asian regional camp was held in the Philippines in 1977, the second in Singapore in 1978, and the third in Hong Kong in 1979. In 1979, AYO became the first Australian orchestra to tour the People’s Republic of China, playing works that incorporated traditional Chinese instruments (with local tutoring); it returned there on tour in 1988. A highlight was an appearance with the Shanghai Symphony.

From 1980, when Michael Elwood was appointed administrator, AYO began to rely less heavily on the ABC, and sought out high-profile engagements with commercial companies and festivals in Australia and overseas, such as the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh Festival. The new decade saw AYO presenting concerts in recently built performing arts centres around the nation, including the Sydney Opera House and the Adelaide Festival Centre, and also presenting the world premiere of Dmitri Kabalevsky’s *ISME Fanfares* under his baton at Perth’s new Concert Hall for the International Society for Music Education conference in 1974. In 1976 it performed in eight states of the USA as part of its bicentennial celebrations, being based for several days at the

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40 In 1979, Stephen Fitzgerald published an influential, federal government-commissioned Report on Asian Studies in Australia, urging that Asian Studies be mainstreamed in schools and tertiary institutions. In the 1980s and 1990s, Asia Institutes and Centres of Australian Studies were being established in Australian and overseas universities.

41 Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 127. Camp orchestras also played works by Australian composers including Margaret Sutherland, Alfred Hill, Dorian Le Gallienne, Richard Meale, Barry Conyngham, and George Dreyfus was commissioned to write *Music for Music Camp* in 1967. In 1974, NMCA began to help young composers participate in the Commonwealth Assistance to Australian Composers scheme.

42 The federally funded Australia Council not only gave NMCA grant funding but also indicated that it would help pay the salary of an administrator to assist Ruth Alexander, NMCA’s organising secretary at the time.

43 Following meetings of representatives of several countries in Manila in 1975, a series of Asian Regional Camps was planned. Australian musician Peter Seymour was appointed one of the two camp directors, the other being the Filipino musician Lucrecia Kasilag; together they organised the first camp near Manila. Seymour auditioned many players and accepted (among others) sixty-six members of the Philippine Youth Orchestra for the camp (Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 120–21).

44 Peter Seymour, a professional musician and founder of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, was a timpani player in the first AYO concert in 1957.

45 Epstein, *Concert Pitch* 119, 128.
The ninety-six-member orchestra made its inaugural European tour in 1984 where it performed in world-class venues, including London’s Royal Albert Hall and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, with Ronald Zollman as chief conductor and the Australian Sir Charles Mackerras as principal guest conductor.

In Australia’s bicentennial year, 1988, AYO gave special performances on the steps of the Sydney Opera House of Peter Sculthorpe’s new bicentennial work, Child of Australia. The Australian Bicentennial Foundation also funded the next international tour under conductors Christoph Eschenbach and Sir Charles Mackerras, beginning at Expo 1988 and ending in Frankfurt (with a concert in the Alte Oper). Highlights in 1989 included a concert in the Sydney Town Hall which was conducted by Louis Frémaux and in the 1990 season a concert in Adelaide Town Hall conducted by David Shallon.

Meanwhile, despite AYO’s increasing engagements to perform as a symbol of the nation, NMCA was forced to continue the time-consuming task of applying to the Commonwealth government for its base funding every year. Although IBM gave it a grant of a million dollars in 1989, it also had to keep seeking financial partnerships and other sponsorships for its basic operations. This was felt to hinder its long-term planning and development, and to prevent it from branching out into new activities that it was believed would enhance the transmission of orchestral knowledge and performance skills to young Australians.

Fortuitously, in 1991, the company was able to launch one new venture: a national youth chamber orchestra called ‘The Camerata of the Australian Youth Orchestra’ for players aged eighteen to twenty-five years. The chamber orchestra, comprising thirty-six players, was formed as a response to the cancellation of AYO’s planned tour of North and South America due to the Gulf War that year. Many of the players had been reluctant to travel internationally at such a turbulent time. Under John Hopkins’s baton the chamber orchestra gave its opening performance at New York’s Carnegie Hall as part of its centenary season.

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46 Most of the material in this paragraph is based on Vincent Plush (chief contributor), The First Fifty Years, notes in CD booklet, 6.

47 A film of the tour, entitled The Ambassador’s Symphony, was made by Brian Morris.

48 Available recordings of the 1984 tour under Ronald Zollman include AYO performances of Saint-Saëns’s ‘Allegro moderato’ (Movement II) from his Symphony no. 3 in C minor, op 78, and Percy Grainger’s Irish Tune from County Derry, performed at the Festival Ljubljana (Celebrating Fifty Years CD 1, track 5).

49 Available recordings of AYO’s performances under Sir Charles Mackerras’s baton include that of Gustav Holst’s ‘Jupiter’ from The Planets, Peter Sculthorpe’s Sun Music II and Michael Hurst’s ‘Waltzing Matilda and Click Go the Shears’ from Swanagan’s Promenade at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms, August 1984 (Celebrating Fifty Years CD 1, tracks 2 and 10, CD 2, track 8).

50 Recordings from AYO’s 1988 European tour under Christoph Eschenbach include Australian composer Graham Koehne’s Rain Forest (Celebrating Fifty Years CD 1, track 6), Messiaen’s ‘Prière du Christ montant vers son père’ from L’Ascension (CD 1, track 8), Glinka’s ‘Overture’ from Ruslan und Ludmila (CD 2, track 2), and Stravinsky’s The Firebird-Suite (CD 2, track 4).

51 AYO’s 1989 performance of Maurice Ravel’s Alborada del graciioso conducted by Frémaux is on Celebrating Fifty Years CD 2, track 5.

52 AYO’s 1990 performance under Shallon of Elgar’s ‘Theme and Variation 1 (C.A.E.)’ from the Enigma Variations, opus 36, and a studio recording of its performance under John Hopkins of Australian composer Barry Conyngham’s ‘Within the Reef’ from Vast 1: The Sea are on Celebrating Fifty Years CD 1, track 11 and CD 2, track 3.


55 A recording of Camerata Australia’s performance in Carnegie Hall that year’s included in Celebrating Fifty Years CD 2, track 7. The work was Mendelssohn’s ‘Finale-Presto’ from Symphony No. 4 in A Major (‘The Italian’) conducted by John Hopkins.
after the Easter break, it gave three concerts in Venezuela and five in Brazil. The success of that somewhat
grueling tour resulted in what is now known as Camerata Australia being given a permanent place in AYO
Inc. Its subsequent activities include joint tours of Australia in 1997 with Camerata Scotland, and in 1998
with the choir of King’s College Cambridge, the latter having been organised in conjunction with Australia’s
professional chamber music company, Musica Viva. In 1999 the chamber orchestra toured Queensland and
the South Pacific as part of the Cultural Olympiad Festival, ‘Australia to the World’; and in 2001 it toured in
Canada and the USA, appearing at the Winterlude Festival in Ottawa, the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy
Center, and Harvard University. Camerata Australia features Australian works in its repertoire and on special
occasions has acted as a flagship orchestra, such as at the centenary celebrations of the Australian composer
Margaret Sutherland’s birth. In the field of Australian opera it collaborated with Opera Australia’s OzOpera
group in 1994 for the premiere of Ross Edwards’s Christina’s World, and performed the chamber opera
Metamorphosis by Australian composer Brian Howard in 2006 (in collaboration with Victorian Opera’s Music
Director, Richard Gill).

In 1992 AYO made its first tour to Tasmania as part of a two-week season with conductor Christopher
Bell, followed by a short season and recording sessions in Sydney. In the same year the National Music Camp
Association changed its name to Youth Music Australia (YMA) and began to offer an increasing diversity
of programs. The company’s vision of itself had always included promoting new music, including works
by Australian composers. Having founded the New Music Ensemble at the 1990 national music camp, the
company expanded its promotion of new music. It established a separate residential program called New
Music Now, inviting young composers and musicians to it to develop new artistic projects under the guid-
ance of established composers and performers, and arranging for its chamber groups to collaborate with
professional ensembles. Professional tutors who specialise in new music are employed to train the young
musicians; and established composers are asked to train the young composers as they write, for example,
a group-composed work. The young musicians are trained in the exigencies of new music performance,
including radical instrumental techniques, modern means of sound production, and such developments as
microtonality and complex irrational rhythms. Performance and composition students in the programs have
cooperated to present several world and Australian premieres, for example, at the national music camp at
Monash University in 2005.

Throughout these years, YMA’s policy toward its camp orchestras also changed. No longer were the
players in the Bishop and Alexander orchestras streamed, a practice that had become increasingly unpopular
among the students. Instead, the more advanced players now played alongside the less advanced players
in both orchestras, each of which was thereby to acquire equal musical stature, playing equally difficult, but
different, repertoire.

56 On its 2001 tour, Camerata Australia presented the premiere of Seasons by Barry Conyngham, with ex-AYO percussionist
Claire Edwardes as soloist (interview with Claire Edwardes, now a freelance percussionist in Amsterdam, 10 September 2004).
It also toured to Japan and the UK.

57 For example, in 1999 the New Music Now program was run by the artistic director of the Australian new music ensemble
ELISION, Daryl Buckley.

58 The less advanced players were more challenged than in the past and usually rose to the occasion. Tony Grybowski, verbal
comm., October 2006.
1993 to Mid-1998

1993 was a key year. Apart from seeing the orchestra's first tour of New Zealand (in four of the North Island's cities) and its concert to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB), Youth Music Australia (YMA) faced debates about the nature of its future, indeed its very existence. In response to increased competition from tertiary music institutions from the early 1990s, the company had been facing the challenge of confirming and redefining its place in the youth music scene. Despite favourable anecdotal evidence of the efficacy of its programs, the question was raised as to whether the country really needed a national youth orchestra. In 1993, the government (under Prime Minister Paul Keating) decided in the affirmative and began to implement a new, far-reaching artistic policy with some concrete results for the training of highly competent, gifted young musicians. Besides setting up the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), initially to train high calibre soloists for periods of up to two years, it provided Youth Music Australia with guaranteed, continuing funding ($3.5 million in 1993) to run AYO as a flagship orchestra and to enable it to provide a larger number of ancillary programs. YMA responded by revisiting and redefining the artistic rationale of its activities and imagining new ones, focusing on a short, intensive model of providing one to six weeks of hothouse training and performance experience in the form of camps, tours, special regional programs, etcetera.

The perennial support from 1993 allowed the company to take a leap forward in its operations, plan new programs, and appoint regular full-time and part-time staff to implement them. Guaranteed government funding raised the morale of AYO Inc.'s staff and the students enormously. Unlike most other Australian youth orchestra bodies at state, city and suburban levels and in tertiary institutions and schools, AYO Inc. was now able to rely less heavily on parents' and friends' generosity and support and regard its young players as an independent peer group of adults who were largely responsible for their own actions and progress. The increased funding enabled the organisation to become more professional in its operations. However, it still encouraged individuals and teams of volunteers to work at the company's Sydney office and to provide administrative support at the annual camps and other activities, thus enabling the company to stretch the value of the public and corporate dollar.

From 1993 onwards, the company could at last afford to present a few dedicated chamber music or small ensemble training programs at the national music camps, including chamber music, advanced chamber music, and wind brass and percussion ensemble workshops, to which were added the twenty-first century

59 This paragraph is based on an interview with Tony Grybowski, October 2006.
61 Located in Melbourne, ANAM also eventually developed non-degree programs in chamber music and orchestral playing for small numbers of young soloists on full scholarships (interview with ANAM managing director, Robert Clarke, May 2007).
62 In return for the substantially increased government funding, Youth Music Australia was required henceforth to show careful fiscal responsibility and produce three-year plans, artistic reports and audited financial reports.
63 Government funding was provided through DCITA. In 2006, AYO Inc. received approximately $1.3 million from DCITA, but its annual turnover in recent years has been about two to three million. The company caters annually to about 350 students nationally.
64 The persuasive proposals for the expansion of the company's programs were presented under Sharman Pretty's tenure as general manager of NMCA/AYO in the early- to mid-1990s.
performance project, the ensembles in residence project, the keyboard program, the composition program, the arts journalism, ‘Words about Music’ program and the arts administration program from 2000.\textsuperscript{56}

For some time, the organisation had planned tours for AYO every year. AYO’s European tour in 1994, under conductor Yakov Kreisberg, was followed by an Australian tour within Musica Viva’s program. It also aimed to provide special support for students on the cusp of a professional orchestral career. From 1995 it was able to offer a series of orchestral fellowships in collaboration with Symphony Australia\textsuperscript{56} as part of AYO’s ‘commitment to developing the next generation of outstanding young orchestral musicians’ and to ‘bridge the gap between education and the profession’\textsuperscript{57}.

The highlight of AYO’s activities in 1996 was its world tour, including concerts presented in Sydney, Amsterdam and cities in Germany and North America. It included a performance at the Cultural Olympiad during the Olympic Games at Atlanta along with members of the local Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, thus creating a force of more than 240 musicians, who performed Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony under maestro Christopher Seaman. Meanwhile Sydney was beginning to prepare itself for the cultural events at its Olympic Games in 2000, at which AYO would be invited to perform.

In 1998, AYO returned to China to perform in eight cities under the baton of Tan Li-Hua, and in the next year AYO was engaged to perform at an event in Canberra to honour the Australian visit of China’s President.\textsuperscript{58}

In the mid- to late-1990s the company became intensely aware of the gap in opportunities available to regional as opposed to urban-dwelling students throughout Australia. It therefore established a program to bring orchestral and ensemble music-making opportunities to young musicians in regional and rural areas. In 1999 it piloted a program that would build on the musical strengths of selected regional, youth music centres by providing visiting professional musicians to tutor and conduct members of their orchestras or other ensembles (around eight to twenty-five years of age), complementing the students’ existing tuition, and culminating in the ensemble’s concert performances in their region with a visiting conductor. Besides that, the professional tutors would train and mentor the members of a young, nationally auditioned chamber music group, such as a string quartet or a wind and percussion ensemble, as they prepared to play a program of given works for concert performance in their regional area as well as in a capital city. The young ensemble players would also be required to help the professional tutors to train the regional participants. Known as the Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA) program, its pilot in 1999 was held at the secondary-level regional conservatorium in the country town of Orange, New South Wales. From then on a series of YACA programs was presented up to four times a year in many regional centres around Australia.

\textbf{Mid-1998 to 2007}

From mid-1998, AYO Inc.’s management, committees and the musicians it employed developed many new ideas for implementing new programs and enriching the artistic quality of existing ones.\textsuperscript{59} Most significantly,

\begin{itemize}
  \item The ‘Words about Music’ program is detailed in Ford’s article, in this volume.
  \item Symphony Australia is the umbrella organisation that oversees the development of Australia’s orchestras, including youth and professional symphony orchestras.
  \item When the President of China, Jiang Zemin, visited Canberra in 1999, AYO performed at a concert and dinner hosted by the Prime Minister, John Howard.
  \item Prominent among the innovators were Artistic Committee chair Anne Gilby and Artistic Administrators Carol Hellmers and Simon Rogers.
\end{itemize}
AYO (the orchestra) was able to expand its programs from 2000 to include a second season of winter concerts, which involved touring to various national capitals in Australia and performing in prominent concert halls, such as at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in Brisbane in 2005. In 1999, AYO Inc. began to present a separate residential string orchestra and chamber music program for twelve to seventeen year-olds, thus giving birth to the eight-day residential program called the Young Symphonists. The program included provision of training in string performance techniques, and in accordance with tradition, it provided time for sport or recreation and social activity as well.

From around 1998, the company was beginning to receive major awards and accolades for its achievements. In mid-1998, Youth Music Australia accepted an award from the Australian Music Centre and the Australasian Performing Right Association for ‘the most distinguished contribution to the advancement of Australian music education’, and in 1999 AYO received an award from ABC Classic-FM for the ‘best recording of an Australian work’, that is, its 1997 recording of three concertos by Australian composers. In 2000, AYO appeared at the Arts Festival for the Olympic Games in Sydney with conductor Robert Spano and violinist Pinchas Zukerman (by courtesy of Musica Viva), while in the year of Australia’s Centenary of Federation, 2001, it performed at the launch of the celebrations at Canberra’s Parliament House, the live-televised ‘Journey of a Nation’ concert at Sydney’s Centennial Park, and, as part of the Melbourne Federation Festival’s presentation, the performance of ‘Ceremony,’ along with the internationally known Aboriginal rock band, Yothu Yindi.

In 2000, Youth Music Australia changed its name to Australian Youth Orchestra Inc., thereby becoming known by the name of its flagship orchestra. In 2001 the AYO completed its sixteenth international tour, performing in the Netherlands, France and Germany with conductors Mikko Franck and Vladimir Askenazy. From 2002, AYO’s headquarters were at last to be located in a spacious building along with other Australian-music associated organisations such as the Australian Music Centre. The state government made it possible for the orchestra to move its central office to its present harbour-front premises in the historic Arts Exchange Building within the arts precinct area of The Rocks in Sydney (see Figure 5), where it also holds part of its archives, the other part remaining in the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

Well into the 2000s, ongoing funding enabled AYO Inc. to provide new programs to fulfil emerging needs of the music industry. The company management saw the need early in this period to assist young people who were interested in taking up a career in arts management and in music journalism, given the relative lack of training opportunities in Australia at the time. At its music camps AYO Inc. began to offer an Arts Administration training program for emerging arts managers and music journalists, who were required to manage and publicise the concerts presented by the camp orchestras, professional ensembles-in-residence, and young composers with new music performers, who, for example, presented a limited production of a newly composed opera to an audience at the 2005 camp. This program, called the ‘Scenes and Arias’ project, involved a team of young composers who had combined forces over the preceding months to write a group-composed

70 For example, its second Season in July 2003 under Australian conductor Thomas Woods included John Tavener’s ‘Oh How Shall We Sing the Lord’s Song’ (stanza iii) from Lament for Jerusalem with leading soloists and the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs (Celebrating Fifty Years CD 1, track 4).

71 CD, A Garden of Earthly Delights, Tall Poppies, CD TP113, 1997. The CD comprises Carl Vine’s Oboe Concerto (soloist, David Nuttall), Peter Sculthorpe’s Piano Concerto (soloist, Ian Munro) and David Lumsdaine’s A Garden of Earthly Delights (solo cello, David Pereira).
opera. At their workshops they discussed their compositional problems and production ideas with Australian composers Richard Meale and Richard Mills (the latter of whom was also the program director) and with the professional singer Merlyn Quaife, who tutored the voice students in new vocal music performance. At the end of the two-week camp, Mills conducted a public performance of the opera by a group of professional soloists and the select vocal and instrumental students who had collaborated with the young composers, their composer tutors and their vocal and instrumental tutors to prepare the performance. Both groups of students involved reported that the project had offered them a rare experience that enabled them to acquire a new understanding of the relationship between compositional and performance activity. Meanwhile, a number of notable AYO alumni were teaching the various sections or, in some cases, directing camp programs. These included harpist Marshall McGuire, trombonist Michael Mulcahy and violist Brett Dean, and the three camp orchestras acquitted themselves well in annual live ABC-FM broadcasts in the public camp concerts.

This 2005 camp, like other camps before it, also provided scholarships for which arts management and journalism students could compete, giving them opportunities to work in media offices (press, radio or TV). Guidance from industry mentors was provided for arts journalism students and on-the-job management experience for arts management students with companies such as OzOpera, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony. These new programs, like all the company’s programs, were designed with John Hopkins’s maxim in mind: learn through experience!

Another new program was designed to assist students on the cusp of a professional orchestral career. Realising that work experience opportunities in professional orchestras were few, in the 2000s the company

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72 Interviews in January 2005 with Richard Meale, Richard Mills, Merlyn Quaife and several student participants.
73 Anne Gilby, verbal comm., April 2003.
established what it called ‘accelerated learning’ programs, including the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra-
AYO Orchestral Career Development Program and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra String Orchestral
Fellowship. These developments constituted a new phase in professional training opportunity. As an
appreciative TSO-AYO program Fellow, Linda Garrett, commented in 2003: ‘My involvement as an orchestral
fellow with the TSO was an extremely beneficial time—joining the orchestra in no fewer than seven concerts,
including four different programs, and touring to Hobart, Launceston and Devonport. I was fortunate to sit
next to the Principal Viola for the entire three weeks’. In 2006, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the nation’s
premier professional chamber orchestra, also offered emerging string players the opportunity (identified
through AYO’s National Auditions for Performance-based Programs) to work with dedicated mentors for a
whole concert season, to help the young musicians make the transition to a professional career.

AYO Inc. also offers seven fellowship and scholarship programs, as illustrated in Figure 1. As the right
column in Figure 1 indicates, AYO administers the Dorothy Fraser scholarship for the career development of
its female players. Another set of bursaries is provided to cover registration and travel costs for its young brass
players to participate in the master-classes and performances at the Melbourne International Festival of Brass
(MIFB). The Arts Administration Fellowships for participants in the NMC arts administration program offer
up to eight weeks’ practical experience in an arts administration role, and the Music Presentation Fellowship
for the NMC arts journalisms/Words about Music program participants offers access to mentors at Symphony
Australia and ABC Classic FM, and hands-on experience in areas of radio programming and presentation,
research and writing. Finally, the NIDA-AYO Composition Fellowship, awarded to an NMC Composition
Program participant, provides the opportunity to write incidental music for a play to be performed at the
National Institute for Dramatic Art (NIDA).

Another issue in the company’s development in these years was its approach to the choice of orchestral
repertoire, which expanded around the year 2000. AYO Inc’s music directors and senior management had
previously focused on orchestral repertoire using ‘standard’ resources, including some Australian compositions,
but they now decided to include large-scale orchestral and vocal works every so often. In 2000, AYO performed
Anton Bruckner’s Ninth Symphony in Perth, and in 2003—also in Perth—it performed Arnold Schoenberg’s
rarely presented Gurrelieder, a grand oratorio requiring 148 players and massed choirs on stage. AYO’s tour to
Europe in 1990 (on the twentieth anniversary of its first European tour) included only works for a standard-sized
orchestra, including the usual mix of classical, contemporary, and contemporary Australian repertoire. However,
in 2004 it performed Gustav Mahler’s Resurrection Symphony under Benjamin Zander’s baton in Sydney and
Canberra, and in 2005, as part of the Queensland Music Festival, it again presented a large-scale work, Richard

74 The TSO-AYO program provides select young musicians with the experience of professional orchestral practice and
repertoire by allowing them to be mentored by a member of the orchestra and perform alongside the professionals in large
orchestral works.

75 The MSO-AYO Fellowship comprises an intensive, seven- or eight day foundation preparation course, during which
participants experience one-to-one coaching on orchestral repertoire with a mentor, perform in and receive feedback on
simulated auditions, and take part in development sessions led by guest presenters on media skills, biomechanics, health and
safety, and preparation for orchestral auditions. At the end of the first stage of this program the young musicians are auditioned
as casuals, after which successful Fellows progress to the second stage, in which they rehearse and perform in the orchestra for
up to three weeks under the guidance of their mentor.

Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* under Richard Mills’s baton, with a team of professional vocalists including Lisa Gasteen. Also in 2005, AYO presented Shostakovich’s Tenth Symphony in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall under Russian maestro Alexander Anissimov, with Melba Recordings issuing a live CD of the performance to considerable critical acclaim in late 2006. As mentioned above in the section ‘Youth Orchestras in the Global Scene’, the rationale behind these repertoire choices was that the 110-or-so young musicians who took part would have the chance to train on big works and play them at a professional standard; and that audiences would also appreciate hearing such rarely performed works. In its first season in 2006, AYO performed another major work by Gustav Mahler, *Das Lied von der Erde*, at the Adelaide Festival of Arts, returning in the second season to play mainly standard repertoire and some Australian works.

**Broadening Collaborations**

Throughout the 2000s, AYO Inc. has increasingly collaborated with leading national performing bodies, arts schools, institutes, festivals and other networks, and more indirectly with state youth orchestral associations which sometimes help provide tutors and conductors for AYO programs and share ideas (see Figure 6).

As Figure 6 illustrates, the company has been engaging in educational collaborations with the annual Melbourne International Festival of Brass as well as the Double Reed festival at Monash University in 2004, and it has collaborated administratively with Youth Orchestras Australia, which coordinates Australia’s youth orchestral organisations; the Australian Round Table for Arts Training Excellence (ARTATE); Symphony

77 This performance by AYO was nominated for Best Classical Performance in the Helpmann Awards on 31 July 2006.

78 Of the numerous recordings of this work made in the centenary year of Shostakovich’s birth, this AYO recording under Anissimov (who lived through the Stalinist period depicted in the work and was a former student of Gennady Rozhdestvensky) was singled out by a number of critics. Andrew Quint in *Fanfare Review* (May–June 2007, 203–204) described it as ‘a compelling performance, with an authoritative massed orchestral sonority and fully “professional” solo moments—clarinet in the first movement, horn and bassoon in the third, oboe at the outset of the fourth. The young string players handle the Allegro’s blistering passagework admirably,’ while Mark Wagner wrote: ‘My view of what a youth orchestra can do has forever been changed by this recording’: Positive Feedback Online, USA, at <http://www.ayo.com.au/news/news/index_html?content_id=4442#review>, accessed 4 April 2007.

79 AYO played Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloe* Suites 1 and 2 and Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms* and *Rite of Spring* in the Sydney Opera House under Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Oleg Caetani, with the Sydney Philharmonia Choir joining AYO in the *Symphony of Psalms*. As AYO Inc.’s CEO, Colin Cornish, wrote, ‘Rarely would a musician experience the challenge and achievement of performing three huge masterpieces of the orchestral repertoire in one concert program.’ Caetani said, ‘I find it extremely important for our young musicians to perform such major repertoire in concert before they embark on professional careers’ (AYO Inc. press release, 31 July 2006).

80 YOA, founded as a result of an inaugural forum of peak state and territory-based youth orchestras which was run by AYO Inc. and the Music Board of the Australia Council in 1999, coordinates the country’s state-based youth orchestras, as shown in Figure 2. It aims to ‘create and develop the next generation of musicians and audiences who contribute to a vibrant orchestral community in Australia.’ <www.youthorchestrasaustralia.org>, accessed 11 November 2006. Its member orchestras agreed to terms of reference used by the Music Board in its analysis of their artistic standards, quality of personnel, range of ensembles, relationships with stakeholders, and financial information for establishing their funding levels for the next triennium. YOA also promotes government, corporate and educational sector relationships, and commissions Australian compositions.

81 The federal government initiative ARTATE began in 2005 as an advocate for young students across the arts, promoting collaborative projects, and organising discussions on issues of funding levels and sponsorship. National performing arts training organisations participate, including the Australian Ballet School, Australian Film Television and Radio School, Australian National Academy of Music, Flying Fruit Fly Circus, National Institute of Circus Arts, National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association, and the National Institute of Dramatic Arts, that is, institutions that collectively provide high-level training for emerging young dancers, actors, cinema and media artists, musicians, circus artists and Aboriginal Islander performing artists.
Figure 6. AYO's collaborations
Australia’s Artist Development Program; OzOpera; Musica Viva; ABC Classic FM; The Orchestras of Australia Network; and the Australian Music Centre.

In late 2005, Colin Cornish became the new chief executive officer of AYO, replacing Tony Grybowski, who had led the company’s many new developments and consolidation of older ones in the previous seven years. The increasing cost of the company’s programs had by now become problematic. As intimated in our interviews with students and staff, the future of the international touring activity was in doubt. AYO sought funding from both the public and the private sector. In May 2006, the then Minister for Arts and Sport announced that an extra $1.9 million of government funding would be provided for the company over the next four years to help secure the company’s future, including its regular international tours. Continuing its aim to move away from dependence on the public purse, AYO also brought in an equal amount from private companies and sponsors.

Thus, a special European tour has been organised for Season 2 in AYO’s jubilee year of 2007, when Lawrence Foster again conducts the orchestra across four continents on a thirteenth international tour since 1970. The 107-player AYO opened the jubilee year with a performance of Sergey Prokofiev’s Peter and the Wolf with animated film to 10,000 people under the stars in Perth’s Supreme Court Gardens under Brad Cohen’s baton. Other Jubilee concerts included Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem in the Perth Concert Hall at the University of Western Australia Perth International Arts Festival, as well as in the Opera House in Sydney under Australian conductor Paul Kildea, recorded by ABC Classic FM.

Broadening Educational Philosophy

Clearly, the educational philosophy of NMC/AYO has broadened and changed over the decades. As in the early days, AYO Inc. continues to nurture and develop the talents, commitment and career prospects of the young orchestral and chamber musicians in its care, to transmit the skills and understanding of orchestral performance to students as a way of ‘living and thinking.’ The company still aims to enrich ‘the cultural life of our country, instilling in its participants a love of music and a dedication to the highest standard of performance.’ However, the company’s music-educational philosophy had to keep changing in order to adapt to the many changes in the music industry over the decades.

OzOpera promotes Australian opera artists and composers and the performance of Australian operas, and has an educational touring program.
Musica Viva is a national chamber music presenter, offering major concert series, school performances in Australia and overseas, and international touring of Australian musicians.
ABC-FM is the leading national FM-band classical radio station.
The Orchestras of Australia Network is a clearing house and advocacy centre for Australia’s professional and amateur orchestras.
The Australian Music Centre is a national centre, library, score library and archive that promotes Australian composers, their works and performances.
Malcolm Gillies, verbal comm., 20 April 2007
Around ten percent of students whom we interviewed mentioned the growing costs of the international tours which had or would prevent them from attending them, since they had to partly fund such tours themselves despite funds raised by the AYO’s International Tour Fund launched in 2002.
As the co-founder John Bishop wrote, NMC/AYO is an organisation of ‘young people, who with their combined vision and intent, coupled with the visionary leadership of their tutors … will together discover a concept of living and thinking that will remain with them as an everlasting inspiration’ (AYO files, Sydney).
Cornish, Australian Youth Orchestra, 2007 6.
In the mid- to late-1990s, the company committed itself to innovation and experiment within the structural framework of its various programs, and it not only exposed students to canonical works of the repertoire but also to new music with its special performance techniques and to big ‘blockbuster’ works as well. Some tutors experimented with and found effective methods of developmental and experiential learning for pre-professional young musicians, some of whom remained in long-term relationships with them, while others gave considerable thought to the psycho-social and career development of their protégés, analysing their own role in their students’ creative achievements, and reading the literature. Yet others found that there is a close correlation between a conductor’s or tutor’s rehearsal and performance strategies and interpersonal skills and the students’ ability to improve their technical skills, expressive ability, other musical competences, confidence and motivation in rehearsals.

Interviews with students about their own learning, rehearsal and performance behaviour at the camps have yielded some thoughtful assessments of their experiences. Some new recruits were obviously overwhelmed by their first orchestral camp rehearsal, especially by their perception of the collective weight of sound produced by the full ensemble and its relationship to the dynamic level of their own playing. For some this was a little disconcerting until they became accustomed to it, commenting that learning to listen to the other players in a section, indeed the very feeling of playing with others, is acquired only after several rehearsals. Some with solo experience said that they found learning to play in an orchestra to be a very different musical and psychological experience from learning to play solo. Some of those who had concerto solo-playing experience said they found it difficult at first to blend with the other players in the same section. Many reported that a confident awareness of their own proportional contribution to a tutti sound came only after much playing together. Several string players, especially those with limited ensemble experience, said that they appreciated it when their conductor in orchestral rehearsals taught them certain types of bowing and arm weight movements that they had not encountered with their private teachers. The only negative feedback came from the few who found it hard to adjust to the fast pace and high musical expectations of conductors and tutors at the rehearsals, though those who persevered usually succeeded in adapting. Some students cited internal variables (for example, nervousness) and external factors (for example, the difficulty of tasks or luck) to explain their personal difficulties when performing.

When asked what they thought were the advantages or disadvantages of the social as opposed to the musical aspects of the music camp experience, some students who had participated in successive camps mentioned that they had initially suffered from feelings of social—and sometimes associated musical—inadequacy, but that at their second or third camps, their shyness and feelings of musical inadequacy tended to diminish or

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91 I found several successful, long-term mentors (who requested not to be named) in my interviews at NMC and YACA programs. Statements in this paragraph are based mostly on interviews and perusal of relevant AYO Inc. files.


dissipate entirely, especially when they came better prepared with prior music practice. Some participants, however, found their experience at their one and only camp so challenging socially that it discouraged them from attending another.

The great majority of AYO players on international tour interviewed were overwhelmingly positive in their opinions of the experiences provided them. While some queried the auditioning process for entry into AYO, all found their contact with the excellent (sometimes famous) tutors and conductors in rehearsals and performance, and the challenging repertoire, to be inspiring. They regarded their experience as a type of accelerated learning on many levels, and a highlight of their lives. They also found the fast life of touring—which they saw as a taste of professional life—to be a valuable experience, though temporarily exhausting. It resulted in a tremendous personal impulse toward improving their skills as musicians through dedicated, hard practice and in a wish to repeat the experience.

**Conclusion**

Although field research has yielded some contrasting opinions about the activities of AYO Inc., informants presented a remarkably unified view of its identity. Factors cited in the shaping of identity included: its free-standing status as opposed to the institutional ties of tertiary and secondary school orchestras; the company’s particular history of development; its ability to draw from the whole nation’s pool of young players and consequently its high relative quality of performance; its promotion of Australian music, musicians and composers; the suitability of its mix of programs for Australian conditions, including its regional and rural outreach; its national and international outlook and activities; and its status as a national symbol. Its self-monitoring activities were seen as contributing to its integrity of purpose and the quality of its programs.

Since its foundation in 1948, NMC/AYO’s collective notion of identity has been one of continual flux, influenced by the winds of economic and political change and the growing awareness by the Australian community of its national status.

This notion initially emerged at the first few national music camps, where the pioneers aimed to create well-rounded young Australian musicians who engaged in sport and recreation as well as music, and who would feed the country’s professional orchestras, teach others to play, either in amateur or professional situations, or just serve as well-informed concert audiences. The notion kept expanding as the organisation received increasing national recognition and funding, which enabled it to fulfil broader educational agendas and acquire greater prominence in the wider community. The next stage of development was to build up its national purview. NMC’s main orchestra received growing critical acclaim as performance standards rose under the guidance of fine national and international tutors, conductors and soloists, culminating in AYO’s concert debut in 1957. From around 1970 the organisation’s identity reflected the growing communal awareness of Australia’s location in Asia, as it presented Asian tours and combined forces with young Asian musicians at orchestral camps in Australia and those developing in some Asian countries. AYO also obtained substantial

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94 I interviewed AYO players before and after their performance at the Proms in London’s Albert Hall during their tour in the autumn of 2004.

95 One of the senior students said: ‘Auditions are intense tests not only of musicianly skills and the adequacy of one’s preparation but also of personal stamina and temperament, objective auditions are hard to achieve, and rarely perceived as being entirely fair.’
government recognition as a national icon, representing Australia at Expo ’70 in Osaka, while strengthening its performing of Australian compositions and other new music, and increasingly becoming engaged in young performer–composer collaborations.

Within the organisation, the merging contributions of the nine groups of stakeholders—the students, their private instrument teachers, parents and friends, tutors and conductors, administrators, concert and media audiences, music journalists, and public and private sponsors—contributed to the common goal of establishing a high-quality national youth orchestra which could contribute substantially to the transmission of orchestral music in Australian society.

Far-reaching changes in governmental policy on the arts from 1993 had a very beneficial effect on the company. In that year it not only obtained substantially increased resources but was assured of triennial funding, which at last enabled it to plan its programs for several years at a time. This in turn enabled it properly to expand its educational and performance purview in the face of its perceived task of contributing substantially to the transmission of orchestral culture in Australian society. AYO Inc.’s notion of identity from then on was marked by a new self-confidence and awareness of its role as a national icon, and as having a place in the international youth orchestral scene. It clearly defined its goals of achieving high performance standards and of contributing unique programs in the music-pedagogical sector, as opposed to programs in other orchestral training and performance organisations, including those in the tertiary sector. No other organisation provided the series of hothouse training courses (lasting one to six weeks) in orchestral performance and ancillary skills that AYO offered at its camps and other activities. Its activities were complementary to the degree-offering courses offered at the tertiary institutions, the more specialist training at the National Academy of Music, and the parallel, local-level experiences offered by state, regional, suburban and city youth orchestras. AYO was constantly required to examine Australia’s needs and imagine a broad educational purview for itself. It was also expected to find corporate funding, and succeeded in doing so.

Thus, from 1993 to 1998, AYO Inc. offered a number of ancillary programs at the annual camps and other venues, including short courses in chamber music performance; instrumental workshops; programs in the performance of new music, keyboard, composition, arts journalism and arts administration; musician–composer collaborations; and programs to assist students on the cusp of a professional orchestral career to achieve that goal. From around 1998 there was another leap forward, as AYO offered a second season of winter concerts, a residential string orchestra and chamber music training program for twelve to seventeen year-olds (Young Symphonists); a program to build up ensemble/orchestral playing in Australian regional and rural areas (Young Australian Concert Artists); new music programs for interaction between composers and musicians led by new music professionals. Gradually AYO Inc. gained recognition as an important national music institution with a building provided by the State government in the arts precinct in Sydney.

Within the larger picture of musical life in Australia, AYO continues to play its unique role in the orchestral training and performance network, loosely collaborating in urban, regional and rural areas and on the national and international scene with government, national radio, professional orchestras, tertiary and secondary music schools, private instrumental teachers, national and state arts institutes, and the eight state youth orchestras. In so doing it continues to add considerable economic as well as cultural value to the public- and private-sector funding it receives, indeed increasing that value several times over, as it has throughout the
past fifty years. Yet there is little doubt that its construct of identity will continue to change as it grapples with problems that the future is bound to bring.

Acknowledgements

A great many people have assisted in research for this article, including AYO’s General Manager Tony Grybowski (1999–2006) and CEO Colin Cornish (from late 2006), members of AYO’s Board of Directors, especially its former Chair Virginia Henderson AM, and current Chair Professor Malcolm Gillies FAHA FACE (from late 2006), and the ever-helpful impresario and AYO Board member Leonard Amadio AM. Thanks are due to present AYO administrative staff including Pamela Thornton, Bronwyn Lobb, Alison Harbert and Sue Lyons; former AYO staff including Carol Hellmers, Simon Rogers and Michael Elwood; former conductors especially John Hopkins OBE, Richard Mills AM, Marshall McGuire and Fergus Sheil; and former tutors including Rosalie Hunt, Barbara Gilby, Wilma Smith and Thomas Woods.

I am very grateful to Anne Gilby, former Chair of AYO’s artistic committee and tutor, for first proposing that I conduct research into this project and for giving me her detailed views of her long association with AYO. I appreciate the thoughtful comments and unstinting cooperation of the many NMC and AYO students whom I interviewed on various occasions. David Griffiths, Fintan Murphy and Bob Burke were also helpful. Finally, I wish warmly to thank Tony Grybowski, Malcolm Gillies and the anonymous readers for their critical reading of this article, and Paul Watt for his valued research assistance.
AYO’s Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA) program is a particular response to demographic features that make the cultural life of Australia distinctive, namely the sparse regional population and the vast distances between population centres. YACA has two distinct music-educational goals: it aims to give advanced young musicians on the cusp of a professional career an intense experience of chamber music skills development (tuition allied to performance opportunities) and, in an interactive framework involving those same musicians, enhance music-ensemble education in regional areas. The program thus attempts to reconcile inherent tensions between the pursuit of excellence and the provision of equity of access. This article examines the educational structure of the program’s realisation in diverse situations against the backdrop of specific problems of ‘big city’ versus regional assessments of need. Discussion privileges the strategic partnership between AYO and the Regional Conservatorium network of New South Wales in the provision of YACA programs.

Due to the vast size of the Australian continent, the distance between urban, regional and rural areas, and the unequal population distribution, AYO1 faces greater challenges than its equivalents in many other countries in providing equitable music-training opportunities for the nation’s school-aged and tertiary students in urban and regional areas.2 This, of course, is a problem that goes far beyond the responsibility of one national body.

1 As this article is concerned with the realisation of the YACA program as one of the activities of the ‘Australian Youth Orchestra’, and not with the orchestra of the same name, generic references to ‘AYO’, unless otherwise indicated, should be taken to refer to the organisation (elsewhere ‘AYO Inc.’).

2 The Australian government distinguishes between access provided in ‘regional’ as opposed to ‘rural’ areas, by which it means the regional hinterlands of the cities and the rural (agricultural, bush or desert) areas respectively. AYO, however, subsumes the two terms into one: regional.
Yet the Australian public might reasonably expect to find a degree of regional equity in the operations of a self-styled national music educational organisation in receipt of a significant amount of taxpayers’ money, just as it does for the institutions that train the nation’s young athletes in the sporting arena. Although nominally a national body from its inception, AYO’s funding levels over the first four decades of its existence dictated centralised activities; young musicians from regional areas had no choice but to make their way to larger cities to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by AYO and the National Music Camp. There was no possibility that AYO might bring its activities to remote settlement areas.

However, in the years following the federal government’s decision, in 1993, to provide AYO (the organisation) with increased and, most importantly, perennial funding, and as part of an overall review of programs, AYO turned its attention to the need to respond strategically to the settlement demographic of the country. The chamber music development and regional outreach education and performance program known as Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA) is a unique response to distinctive Australian conditions, specifically to the challenges of sustaining traditional European traditions of music making and musical knowledge in situations of geographical remoteness and cultural isolation. The program aims to fulfil the primary functions that are set out in AYO’s Vision Statement: namely, ‘through orchestral and other ensemble training, [to] empower young Australians with musical knowledge and instil in them a deep commitment to employ those skills.’

Vision is translated into action in two ways. First, reflecting AYO’s commitment to providing performance opportunities ‘of the highest standards,’ YACA aims to develop the chamber ensemble performance skills of advanced instrumentals on the cusp of their professional careers. Second, implementing the promotion and practice of ‘equality of opportunity in and access to AYO’s programs,’ it attempts to enrich regional communities by integrating the AYO ensemble with local music programs to help develop, inspire and educate young musicians throughout regional Australia.

The concentrated experience of chamber music learning and ensemble teaching ideally targets young musicians at the upper end of the eligible age range (eighteen to twenty-five years), at a time when they are coming to the end of tertiary music studies and are poised to make definitive choices about whether, where and how to proceed as professional musicians, performers or teachers. Additionally, the program provides AYO participants with an insight into the area of music education in regional Australia and extends their parameters for potential music careers.

The basic structure of each YACA project comprises two parts and proceeds in two stages, reflecting the program’s two-part objective. In the first part, four (string) or five (wind or brass) instrumentalists are selected by national audition to come together to form a new chamber ensemble (henceforth the ‘AYO ensemble’) and participate in a period of concentrated tuition under the guidance of professional musicians, who act as tutors, mentors, role models and, occasionally, co-performers. From this, the chamber group is expected to produce a public performance within the space of a few days. In the second part of each stage of the program, while the professional tutors become musical directors and conductors of a specially formed regional ensemble (henceforth the ‘YACA ensemble’), the members of the AYO ensemble themselves act as mentors and tutors.

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3 As may be seen below, this two-stage model has been varied on occasion for logistic reasons, initially in the string programs.
for and co-performers with the regional participants, requirements that confront the young chamber musicians with very different learning and performance experiences. Both parts of the program culminate in public performances in a range of venues, but it is the interaction between the chamber ensemble and the regional orchestra/ensembles and community that is the key innovative feature of the program.

Commencing as a pilot in 1999, YACA was offered on an average of four times a year around Australia to the end of 2005 (see Appendix 1). To that date, YACA projects had been presented in twenty-five regional towns in five of the six States and one Territory of Australia (Map 1); six towns have been visited twice. Of these six, the five in New South Wales are homes to regional conservatoriums. Of the three programs that have been or will be offered in 2006–2007, two are hosted by NSW regional conservatoriums (Armidale and Albury), with Albury being the first town to receive three programs when the string residency takes place in 2007. Given AYO’s ongoing commitment to present two YACA programs per year in New South Wales, based on funding support from the NSW Ministry of the Arts, it is not surprising to find that more programs have been presented in that State (seventeen to the end of 2007) than in any of the others. The distance from AYO’s administrative centre or discrepancies in the access to supplementary funding sources may explain the distribution of other programs: six in Victoria, six in Queensland, two in Western Australia, two in Tasmania and one in the Northern Territory.

Figure 1. Map showing YACA program regional centres and nearest capital cities
As the program will have been presented thirty-four times, by the end of 2007, in a diverse selection of regional and rural areas, it is timely to evaluate its educational premises, philosophy, structure and organisation and how successfully it has achieved its goals. Using data collected from participants and an analysis of reports prepared by AYO project administrators after each program, this article discusses the implementation and outcomes of the program, proposes some models for its assessment, and comments on AYO’s expansion of the two-stage model into a regional residency in 2007. Particular attention is given to the program’s realisation in the junior conservatoriums that service regional and rural areas of the state of New South Wales, with the opportunities for expansion and consolidation that this partnership provides, though reference will also be made to special conditions arising in other regional centres that have hosted a YACA program.

**Educational and Operational Premises, Philosophy and Terminologies**

Like most other youth orchestra programs, YACA’s educational philosophy focuses on ensemble training, not solo performance. The program is based on three operational premises: (i) that it can significantly enhance its advanced chamber music participants’ professional career development by requiring them to take part in a demanding rehearsing and concert performing experience tutored by professional musicians; (ii) that it can contribute significantly to the development of the chosen regional town’s musical life by providing the same professional tutors as conductors for its young regional orchestra or large ensemble to guide it towards concert performance standard; and (iii) that it can accelerate the learning processes of both ensembles and cost-effectively increase the societal benefits in the region by combining the two procedures into the two-stage structure of a YACA program. These premises grow out of an educational philosophy that is summarised in AYO’s program brochures and in Kartomi’s article on AYO Inc. in this volume. AYO’s commitment to ‘overcoming…geographical barriers to participation’ is of particular relevance here.7

A quality engagement with professional musicians of the highest standards is one of AYO’s publicly stated guiding principles.8 Tutors have a critical role in determining the success or otherwise of the YACA program. They provide leadership and a point of deference for the AYO ensemble, facilitating resolution of social as well as musical interactive problems and acting as a final voice that mediates disagreements, enabling the group to learn rapidly to work together and achieve quick results.9 They are essential to the regional musicians’ development of ensemble capabilities, expanding their roles to become directors/conductors of specially formed bands and orchestras, choosing suitable repertoire that will accommodate weaker players and finding opportunities to challenge stronger players—none of whom they have met before the first day of the program.10

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1 The total of thirty-four includes thirty-two full-scale programs and two special event presentations (see Appendix 1).
3 The organisation aims ‘to create opportunities nationally in which young musicians work, perform and interact with music professionals so as to be influenced by their standards, practice and performance, and to benefit from pathways to professional careers.’ <http://www.ayo.com.au>, accessed 5 April 2007.
4 Interview with Linley Birkett, January 2004.
5 Though repertoire planning and preparation of instrumental parts is, of course, done in advance, it is based on a generalised idea of standards as noted in the application forms of regional participants. See below for a discussion of program prerequisites.
STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE PROGRAM

Both parts of two stage programs feature the same organisational structure. The first part of each stage is held in the nearest capital city to the designated regional centre. Members of the AYO ensemble travel to the base city on the weekend preceding the first week of stage 1 and meet, often for the first time (depending on the individuals’ previous involvement with AYO programs), for a briefing and preliminary run through of the music. The next four days are devoted to rehearsals and coaching, which culminate in a public performance on the third or fourth day. The public performance might take the form of a lunchtime concert, or a recital in a radio station auditorium or church hall. Strategic planning ideally situates the ensemble rehearsal period as a residency in a school, so that activities may also include interactions with school students through open workshops and concert presentations at school assemblies (see Figure 2). Such partnerships not only provide a convenient rehearsal venue, as schools chosen are usually those with an active music program and good facilities, but afford a further opportunity for raising awareness of AYO (one of the program’s objectives).

Figure 2. Partnerships with schools provide structured workshop and performance opportunities. The AYO quartet with students at Brisbane Boys Grammar School, YACA Bundaberg 2004. (Photograph courtesy AYO, with permission.)

The regional outreach component then begins. On Friday, the AYO ensemble musicians and tutors prepare for, and travel to, the designated regional centre to participate in an interactive mini-music camp weekend experience of tutorials, workshops, seminars, and rehearsals with a specially convened local ensemble. Though mostly secondary school students, the regional participants are potentially of all ages (even as young as eight years) and all standards. The coaching they receive from the professional tutors and AYO musicians, and from whichever of the tutors acts as conductor at rehearsals and concerts, usually results in greatly improved performance standards in playing the works which they are assigned. Interaction with members of the AYO ensemble further expands community awareness of opportunities for musical development and careers.
A concert involving all participants, preparation for which provides the focus for the weekend’s activities, generally brings this part of the program to a close on Sunday afternoon. On Monday of the second week, the visiting musicians return to the base capital city and from there to their home cities. Both ensembles prepare new repertoire for the final concert of stage 2, which takes place in the regional centre. This final combined concert, which marks the end of the program, is often as much a celebration of collective euphoria as just a concert and is likely to remain in the memory, at least of regional musicians, as a ‘defining experience.’

The ‘gapped’ two-stage model, whereby the AYO musicians and tutors return to the regional centre for a second time after a period of four to six weeks, was part of the original concept of the program, as it allows time for all participants to ‘settle’ and practice between stages. The gap potentially offers learning advantages and disadvantages. In many cases the AYO ensemble achieves a higher level of performance and cohesiveness in stage 2, as the musicians have been inspired by the experience of the first stage, are more comfortable with each other, are mentally more able to cope with the perhaps unfamiliar physical sensations that come with performances prepared on a few days’ rehearsal, are often better prepared and therefore able to tackle a more challenging repertoire. Timing is critical: if the gap is too big, ensemble musicians can lose confidence and forget what they have achieved. Regional participants also need enough time to practice and prepare their new repertoire for the second stage, but not enough time to lose impetus. A gap of four to six weeks seems to be ideal. But timing is also a matter of logistics and of the availability of all participants. Country towns do not easily accommodate concurrent events. Key dates in the school year (such as final examinations) have to be avoided and the seasonal extremes of weather in tropical centres need to be considered. Returning to the regional community creates a sense of continuity, at least in the short term; returning to the same centre at a future date with a different ensemble combination is a further level of consolidation, as will be discussed below.

YACA programs are necessarily intensely self-monitoring, not least because of the requirement of accountability to government and other sponsors for continued funding. Programs are carefully reviewed: from one day, one weekend, one program to the next. Tutors are asked to comment on the effectiveness of each program at its conclusion and make recommendations for improvements, centering discussion around such issues as whether tutoring should take place in the morning, an optimum time for learning; whether the first public AYO ensemble performance should take place on the third or fourth day (though this is usually a pragmatic decision determined by opportunity); how to balance ‘known’ repertoire for the AYO ensemble with more challenging works for which the students have no pre-knowledge from recordings; how and whether to include ‘new music’ in the repertoires; how to defuse the build up of stress and anxiety for all participants; how and when to schedule ‘free time’ and rest periods; in short, how to achieve a balance of ‘tight’ and ‘loose’ elements in scheduling, teaching and learning so that all involved gain maximum benefit.

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11 So, for example, the program in Bairnsdale (Victoria) in 2000 suffered from competition from the Bairnsdale Secondary College’s debutante ball, a priority for senior students; moreover, a ‘four-schools festival’ eisteddfod held in the region about a week prior to the YACA program had exhausted potential participants’ appetites for musical engagement! (Letter from the Melbourne-based production coordinator to YMA Artistic Administrator, 27 May 2000).

12 This concept was proposed by Eve Newsome, oboist and YACA tutor with a particular interest in improvisation (in itself a ‘loose’ or free style of music-making that may be contrasted to the ‘tight’ discipline of Western notation-based performance practice). YACA Program Report, Warrnambool 2003, Appendix 4 (Tutor’s Artistic Report).
Teaching and learning takes place on different levels during the program’s two stages: the AYO ensemble musicians receive rigorous vocational coaching and mentoring to their highest achievable standard from professional musicians, while the regional musicians receive coaching and teaching from the same professional musicians who are also experienced tutors (who may or may not have previous experience with AYO programs). At the same time, regional musicians (who may be adults or children) receive less formal mentored teaching and coaching from the AYO ensemble musicians and observe those same musicians in high quality performances. The latter are at once learning and, in some cases, depending on age and prior experience, learning to teach and learning through teaching. A professional development opportunity to learn through interaction with the tutors is also offered to teachers in regional centres, some of whom often work in extremely isolated situations with limited opportunity for such development. This last interaction is, of course, a subtle one, requiring tact and diplomacy, but it is not uncommon for YACA tutors to be independently invited back to regional centres, or for local musicians to seek other forms of continued contact with tutors.

The benefits of the program for the regional teaching community have not generally been reported but, as one tutor commented on this aspect of the program in Albury in 2002, ‘If the teaching in these areas is well informed, then the quality of the musicians and the instruction also rises’. A music teacher in Coonabarabran, a country town of 2,900 people on the Castlereagh River, 451 km north-west of Sydney, explains her difficulties as follows:

Coonabarabran can support a thriving painting community, but it is impossible to imagine a career as a muso [musician] there. We had a visiting singing teacher from the Tamworth Conservatorium for a time; but her successor didn’t want to stay overnight. And we’ve managed some video conferencing for wind players with Mark Walton [a teacher] at the Sydney Conservatorium. But parental support for the cost of instruments and lessons is always hard to maintain—enthusiasm needs to be regenerated all the time. A conservative area doesn’t see much point in a continuing music education.

CHOICES

A number of key questions must be addressed in the process of designing each project, a number of strategic choices must be made and the fiscal and philosophical implications of each choice considered. How can one best choose the AYO ensemble participants, given the particular blend of proficiencies required? How should the regional venues be chosen from the many that could benefit? Should the program focus on developing existing ensembles in regional and rural areas, or on building up the individual skills of young musicians who

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33 For example, the Canberra-based trombone tutor at Albury in 2002 was invited back to conduct a weekend of workshops for the Wodonga Brass Band prior to its competition performance later in that year, while individual musicians planned to travel to Canberra each month to take lessons. YACA Program Report, Albury 2002, Appendix 4.
take instrumental music lessons with teachers in regional towns, or somehow combine both? How should it cater for differing standards among members of the regional ensembles? Should AYO exploit occasional partnerships involving venues, festivals, professional ensembles, concerts or other special events, or provide stand-alone activities?

YACA programs are innovative both in their concentrated approach to chamber ensemble development and commitment to regional interaction. Programs must strategically address a number of tensions inherent in the YACA concept itself: between upward (pursuit of excellence in semi-professional ensemble development) and downward (tutoring and mentoring of students of a variety of standards and levels of experience) teaching pressures, between short-term and long-term musical benefits to the regional centre and local students, between the ideological and fundraising advantages of servicing very remote centres and maintaining cost effectiveness, between consolidation and expansion, predictable and unpredictable circumstances and, perhaps most fundamentally, a ‘big city’ versus regional assessment of need. These tensions are reflected in the program’s organisation and outcomes and in the choices that underpin them.

Choice of AYO Ensemble Musicians
All applications for AYO programs are made on a single form, with musicians indicating for which of the programs offered they would like to be considered. Participants are then chosen according to rankings arising out of the nationwide annual auditions. Live auditions are held in seven of the eight capital cities (excluding Darwin), while recorded auditions are accepted from applicants from non-capital cities and regional areas. Auditions follow a standard format: applicants prepare a short unaccompanied work of their own choice, specified orchestral excerpts as set by AYO, and are tested in technical work and sight-reading. However, given the particular character of the YACA program (it requires both ensemble and mentoring/teaching skills, though the former are the primary consideration), some attention is given to the likely balance of personalities in the AYO ensemble, age and previous experience. Players selected are usually at the top end of rankings (subject to availability), and it has been suggested that a strategy of selecting leading players who are not yet principal section players in the Australian Youth Orchestra itself is an excellent one, as the close mentoring the musicians receive as part of the ensemble training goes far towards grooming them for future leadership positions within the orchestra. AYO ensembles within YACA do not emerge, as is more traditionally the case with European chamber music, out of the decision by a group of musicians to play together. Because of the national base of the auditioning process, the AYO ensemble musicians may and frequently do come from different cities across the country and may not have met before. Students with some previous experience of other AYO activities are at least prepared for the idea of coming together with people they may know only slightly for a supercharged experience of short-term music making.

The pressures and challenges of the YACA program exact a range of skills from the AYO ensemble musicians, and not only those of aspiring professionals—technical capabilities and performance prowess, the ability to learn fast and forge an ensemble quickly—which they will have studied to develop. The community-based interactive part of the program makes further demands: strong musical and social leadership and organisational abilities are needed, as is confidence, tact in communication and teaching, adaptability, dedication to an instrument.

and, most importantly, an ability to express a love and enthusiasm for music in a community sense—all this while making the weekend at once enjoyable and worthwhile.  

One AYO ensemble musician reported the experience of taking a masterclass with no time to discuss its preparation or plan, and of spontaneously addressing the challenge of helping the performer while keeping the process interesting for observers. The mix of ages and standards among the regional participants means that even if a basic plan is in place, tutors and musicians must be ready to adapt and change, even completely, and whereas the tutors are experienced professionals, the ensemble musicians are still finding their way. The extent to which individual musicians can be comfortable with such wide-ranging demands and exposed roles depends on personality, age and experience; some respond positively to the challenges, others (rarely) are unsettled and even unnerved by them. For the appropriate personality, however, encountering and learning to cope with new situations and experiences is as valuable as instrumental lessons. As another YACA program participant told me, versatility is essential to survival as a musician, given Australia’s relatively small population and limited professional opportunities in classical music: one has to learn to do everything. Learning is thus not just about lessons: it is about knowing how to be involved with everything, to care about everything.

**Choice of Regional Participants and the Outreach Learning Experience**

Funding bodies in the public and private sectors whose supplementary support is essential to the YACA program are involved primarily in its regional outreach teaching and mentoring aspects and look for certain kinds of outcomes, but principally cost effectiveness, which is measured in relation to the benefits to regional participants, the number of participants, audience statistics and the standard of program management. AYO similarly evaluates its success at least partly in terms of the numbers of regional participants, which is measurable, but also in terms of the inspiration and motivation local musicians derive from their contact with the (relatively young) AYO instrumentalists and the tutors, a matter of atmosphere which is harder to calculate.

The main emphasis at the regional level is on participation and outreach rather than a selection process based on experience, talent or standard. Although nominal minimum prerequisites are in place (participants should range in age between twelve and twenty years and be at a minimum standard of AMEB Grade 20), these are not necessarily enforced. In Shepparton in 2000, for example, participants ranged in age between eleven and seventy-one years; at Broken Hill in 2004, the age range was five to sixty years, at Coffs Harbour in 2004, it was five to sixty-five. Such a span of ages is not uncommon as no-one capable of playing in an ensemble is turned away on the basis of age; the program aims to be non-exclusive so registrations are ‘open

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18 Efficient management is demonstrably one of the greatest strengths of the project and is commented on by a number of participants and in feedback reports. AYO staff is in attendance at all stages of the project.

19 Feedback reports can document, to some extent, the enthusiasm of the local liaison contact, teachers, participants and parents. Newspaper reports can capture, also to some extent, the flavour of the performance events. Audience support is influenced by the effectiveness of local promotion and publicity.

20 The Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) offers a graded series of examinations as a basis for practical (instrumental and vocal) and theoretical learning, comparable to the Suzuki method but based on different principles. Grade 4 is one of the lower levels, requiring only a moderate degree of accomplishment. Even lower levels are sometimes accepted, for example, Grade 2 in the brass program at Grafton in 2003.
to all.’ Variation in standards can be a challenge for the tutors, particularly if numbers are low and do not allow for group subdivision into graded ensembles. There are no selection procedures or auditions for the regional participants, who register on forms distributed by the local teachers or a liaison contact person; nor are there any economic or other barriers to involvement (local participants pay only AU$15) as even the music scores are provided by AYO.

Although each program is planned and organised similarly, the number, age and range of standards of regional participants are, of course, unpredictable. At Albury in 2001, numbers were disappointingly low, the students were mainly flautists, and the publicity focused on the concerts, not the program. Turning (potential) defeat into victory, the tutors adapted the program plan to allow the students opportunities for individual attention. Conversely, at Maryborough in 2001, a new and enthusiastic local advocate saw a dramatic increase in numbers from twenty-five students in stage 1, to stage 2, when 125 musicians (many aged twelve and under) took part. While such numbers were seen as a vindication of the program, the influx highlighted the need to form multiple ensembles with larger groups, also confronting AYO with issues of supervision, security and legal liability, especially as the project was not managed through an established institution. Such variations require a high degree of flexibility on the part of both project managers and tutors, while successful outcomes in the program’s regional component depend on the tutors’ ability to grasp and engage with its interactive nature. Characteristically, a limited range of instruments may be taught in a regional centre; thus an excess of one instrument and a scarcity or absence of another is a fact of regional musical life.

Mutual Awareness of and Interaction between Urban and Regional Musical Worlds

If one aim of the program is to make young regional musicians aware of a world outside their own arena—whether defined by musical group (for example the inward-turning, closeknit world of brass banding), location or age—another aim is to make the mainly city-based ensemble musicians aware of possibilities outside the cities. Music Coordinator Narelle Nelson of the Orange Regional Music Centre wrote, after commenting on the benefits for participants of the inaugural brass program in 1999: ‘[we] offered … the experience that maybe a leg of lamb doesn’t really come from the supermarket—there is life in other parts of Australia … these types of project can give a vastly different perspective to music development than what is perceived by the mainly city based music students—I don’t think it occurred to the [AYO] students that they could possibly earn a living in a regional area.’ Have any of the AYO ensemble musicians ever gone back to teach in a country centre? Possibly because AYO is, by definition, a performance-oriented organisation and because performance opportunities are limited in regional centres, there is no evidence to date that this has happened, though many musicians keep in close contact with their local host families.

Choice of Tutors

Not only is the choice of tutors essential to the success of both parts of the program, it is critical to the success of its community outreach aspects, which demand a particular aggregate of skills (see Figure 3). Tutors are often chosen because of their previous involvement with AYO and understanding of its objectives, or because they may bring specific attributes or qualities to the particular program or area. A well-known professional

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21 Although eighteen months were spent planning the event, the local liaison person, a member of staff at the hosting institution, only distributed information and enrolment forms to students within the institution, and not the wider community.

22 Letter from Narelle Nelson to Tony Grybowski, 4 August 1999.
Dreyfus: Young Australian Concert Artists Program

Figure 3. Tutors are the key to success in the interactive regional aspect of the program: Philip Green conducts the YACA string ensemble at Bendigo, 2004. (Photograph courtesy AYO, with permission.)

brings an established reputation that is a drawcard in itself; the mere presence of such a musician can be an inspiration. Tutors must be expert diagnosticians, able to assess quickly both individual and collective strengths and maximise the potential for optimum realisation of short-term goals. The tutor must have a pleasant and approachable personality, be adaptable, resourceful and available. Enthusiasm, a sense of fun, and an ability to defuse intense and potentially stressful situations are qualities that guarantee success. A (mature age) student providing feedback after stage 1 of the 2001 Albury wind program observed of the visiting flute tutor, Vernon Hill, ‘I was amazed by Vernon. He is so talented, it seemed unreal that he was in the same room giving us advice.’ Of playing together with the AYO ensemble, the same student wrote, ‘I had never played in a wind quartet so it was an experience in itself.’ Of the whole program, ‘It is not often that we get the opportunities to meet and be taught by professionals. As musicians in the country we get less opportunities and exposure than musicians living in the city.’ Taking the same combination of instruments and tutors to a different area and, most particularly, working again with successful tutors, is one planning model by means of which AYO has sought to achieve a balance between consolidation and expansion in developing its YACA program.

23 Brass program tutors are ideally required to be known in the brass band world and have knowledge of both brass band and orchestral performance traditions and repertoire.

24 Letter from Amy Sledzione to Carol Hellmers, 27 April 2001.

25 For example, brass, with tutor Peter Walmsley (trumpet) (Orange 1999, Tamworth 2001, Grafton 2003); brass, Dominic Harvey (horn) (Albury 2001 wind and 2002 brass); brass, Yoram Levy (trumpet) (Burnie 2002 and Hobart 2004); strings, with Philip Green (cello) (Shepparton 2000, Bairnsdale 2004 and Bendigo 2004); strings, Keith Crellin (viola) (Darwin 2002 and Hervey Bay 2001); strings, Patricia Pollett (viola) (Hervey Bay 2001 and Bundaberg 2004); strings, Michele Walsh (violin) (Townsville 2002, Bundaberg 2004) ; wind, with the Southern Cross Soloists (Paul Dean, clarinet), a most successful partnership with a professional wind quintet, despite the occasional difficulties of accommodating the schedule of an active performing group (Maryborough 2001, Bundaberg 2003, Grafton 2004 and Cairns 2005); wind, Eve Newsome (oboe) (Maryborough 2001, Warrnambool 2003).
Choice of Instrumental Focus in Regional Programs: What to Send Where

Commonly, regional musicians may have little or no experience of ensemble music-making. Where a community orchestra, youth ensemble or brass band exists, the program will seek to involve those musicians and build on strengths and networks for audience support at performances. Working together with an established ensemble, with all that that implies in terms of cohesiveness, discipline and structure, can enhance the program’s impact. But this engagement can also bring its own difficulties. One byproduct of isolation is a kind of insularity: local music-making is sometimes highly competitive and often dominated by strong personalities. Local communities are not blank slates onto which big city visitors may write what they please; a centralised assessment of ‘need’ may not of itself produce a positive local response. City-based administrators and teachers must walk a delicate line between respecting the realities of regional musical life and securing a broad base of support for the program. Responses can be unpredictable. For example, AYO has tended to place the YACA brass programs in areas/towns where a vigorous local tradition of banding might be assumed to generate enthusiastic support. On a number of occasions, however, tensions became apparent between AYO’s commitment to a national program coverage and the realities of musical life in smaller centres with their undercurrents of factionalism. Certainly, the support of the local brass band movement has not always been forthcoming in situations where it might reasonably have been expected.²⁶

As a musical culture, banding has certain distinctive features. The history of brass and wind banding in Australia is a long one, dating back to the drum and fife music of the British marine musicians that accompanied the First Fleet on its arrival in 1788. All-brass bands, which were ubiquitous throughout the land, can be traced back as far as the 1850s. As brass band historian John Whiteoak has written, ‘Victoria, NSW and, to a lesser extent, Tasmania were the main sites of late nineteenth-century band movement development, but by the 1880s, even far flung rural communities generally had one (often several) drum and fife, mixed reed and brass, or all-brass band, while city suburbs could also boast one band or several.’²⁷ Banding was likely to run across successive generations within families, while teaching and learning took place between generations within the band. Primarily and until very recently an exclusively male pursuit, banding became increasingly regulated and inward turning as contesting became a governing cultural process.²⁸ Although banding, like other ensemble activities, has been affected by school-based instrumental training programs (bands now routinely include girls and young women and many have converted to concert bands), historical competition rivalries (successes and failures) are enshrined in the musical memory of local musicians. Banding, like sport and particularly Australian Rules football, is deeply expressive of the competitive Australian spirit.²⁹ like football teams, bands

²¹ As, for example, in Tamworth in 2001 (see YACA Program Report, [p. 6]) and in programs offered in Tasmania. Two local brass bands were offered as a ‘captive audience’ for a brass program in Albury (letter from Peter Burge [Director, Murray Conservatorium] to Carol Hellmers, 15 May 2001; YACA Program Report, Albury 2001, Appendix 3) but this support did not materialise when the program took place in 2002.


²⁴ The success of Peter Walmsley as a tutor in three YACA brass programs is a case in point. A member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s trumpet section and then current musical director of the A-grade Willoughby City Band, he enjoyed a high profile in the brass band world as the youngest ever National Brass Band Champion of Champions winner and a highly successful brass band competitor. Such kudos proved to have its own value in attracting a local audience for performance events, if not always increased local participation.
attract passionate allegiances and enshrine essentially conservative values. Of all community music-making activities, the brass band movement would seem paradoxically to be at once most likely to be deeply integrated into the communities that support it and, at the same time and perhaps for that very reason, least susceptible to outside interventions. Efforts to harness the enthusiasm of local amateur brass banding traditions to the implicitly orchestral YACA brass programs must not only recognise the differences between the cultures of banding and orchestral performance, but also accommodate the historically competitive character of the brass band movement and ensure that local rivalries do not result in musicians being excluded.

Seven wind programs have been presented to the end of 2005, most of which have included at least one novel feature. In Maryborough, Queensland, in 200, the concept of engaging an established professional wind and piano sextet in a tutorial role was explored. This enabled the performance of an expanded repertoire in which the AYO ensemble and the Southern Cross Soloists played together. The Bathurst wind program in 2002 included YACA’s first Australian commission, a new work entitled Night Vision by Stuart Greenbaum, commissioned by Father Arthur Bridge of Ars Musica Australis. Eve Newsome introduced improvisation to the Warrnambool program in 2003 as a means of alleviating the build up of stress during demanding periods of rehearsal for the quintet, including an improvisation in one of the group’s concert performances. In the same program, taking advantage of Victoria’s more contained geography and of extra funds from Regional Arts Victoria, the quintet trialed a five-day regional tour, presenting concerts in Stawell, Hamilton, Warrnambool, Moonambel and Apollo Bay (see Figure ).

Perhaps because string instruments are numerically privileged in Western classical music and form the basis of most orchestral ensembles, the regional component of YACA string programs seems to have had a stability not always shared by other groupings of instruments, even though not all string instruments may be equally represented (the lower strings are characteristically under-represented in regional centres). More string programs have been held (seventeen out of a total of thirty-four to the end of 2007) in which more people have participated, allowing graded ensembles to be formed and challenges to be structured to musicians’ abilities more effectively. It is within the string programs that one finds experimental variations on the two-stage model and expansion of its structure. Three string programs were situated in remote centres: in Darwin (the first program in the Northern Territory) and Townsville (the first in north Queensland), where a strategic partnership with a locally-based music festival created additional performance opportunities for the

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30 The Southern Cross Soloists ensemble comprises soprano, wind quartet (at Maryborough this consisted of flute, clarinet, horn and bassoon) and piano. The ensemble’s soprano was not involved in the program at Maryborough, where tutorial staff was supplemented by guest oboist Eve Newsome. Normally only two tutors are engaged for each program: sometimes even only one. In this case, the extra numbers were useful for dealing with the sudden influx of one hundred additional students in stage 2 of the program, but this was not planned.

31 The Krommer Octet Partita in F, op. 57, the Gounod Petite Symphonie and the Poulenc Sextet for piano and winds.

32 The commission allowed the ensemble to work with the composer on the development of the work; this in itself was an innovation. Ars Music Australis now supports the YACA program through regular commissions: Maria Grenfell’s Dancing at the Camerata (for brass, Grafton, 2003) and Paul Stanhope’s Dancing with Strangers (for string quartet, Bundaberg, 2004). A workshop rehearsal with the composer is built into the YACA schedule where feasible. AYO’s general involvement with Australian composers and Australian content is the subject of a separate study by Joel Crotty and Kay Dreyfus.

33 A regional tour was also undertaken as part of the string program in Bendigo (in central Victoria) in 2004.

34 In Bundaberg in 2004 there were enough violas (traditionally the ‘hole’ in a regional string ensemble) for a separate viola ensemble to be formed (YACA Program Report, 4).
AYO ensemble; from Albany (in southwest Western Australia) in 2003, the AYO quartet undertook a four-day regional tour. In each of these programs, a one-stage, two-week residency replaced the two-stage model. The decision to select an established string ensemble to be in residence at the Murray Conservatorium in Albury, NSW, for a period of two months in late 2007 seems to signal a turn to a tested, less (potentially) fraught ensemble development and interactive model which also takes advantage of the stable infrastructure of a recognised educational institution and a collaboration with an established touring chamber music organisation (Musica Viva Australia). Only one percussion project (Bathurst 2003, conducted as a performance partnership with Synergy, an Australian group specialising in the performance of ‘new’ music) has been offered to date, probably because significant logistic considerations are attached to the movement of instruments for the advanced ensembles from the cities to the regional centres (see Figure 5).

**Consolidation: YACA and the Regional Conservatorium Network of New South Wales**

A variety of factors influences the choice of regional venue or centre, including geographical location, the supply of available instrumentalists both within the town and its potential rural feeder area, the enthusiasm of local teachers, the venues available to accommodate rehearsal and performance activities and the support infrastructure. There is some local input into the selection of a regional centre, but the final decision rests with AYO. As the YACA program has become established and well-known, AYO has received many requests from prospective presenters, but much preliminary investigation and groundwork takes place before a final decision.

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35 One stage programs were also applied to the wind programs in Castlemaine in 2005 (which also included a touring component) and Cairns (2005). In 2007, AYO announced a sixteen-day one-stage wind program in Western Australia.

36 The idea of a Regional Residency derived from the ‘Quartets in Access’ program designed for students with limited music-educational opportunities in regional areas of the United States (e-mail from Bronwyn Lobb, July 2006) and is supported by a grant from the Colonial Foundation.
is made. An amalgam of considerations govern choice, some political, some strategic, others philosophical or ideological. Because AYO is a national organisation in receipt of funds from the central federal government, it is committed to cover all States and Territories. However, taking a program to very isolated areas—such as Darwin (Northern Territory), Albany (Western Australia), Broken Hill or Grafton (New South Wales)—involves significant expense and careful logistical planning which may include some modification to the structure of the program.37 In pursuit of its reconciliation of idealism (educational innovation) and pragmatism (attracting and maintaining funds and sponsorship), AYO has striven to achieve a balance between consolidation and expansion in its YACA program. Philosophically, choice is balanced along a continuum between centres in which music-making is of a good standard, will benefit from external support, and may perhaps provide future participants for AYO programs on the one hand, and ‘areas of need’ on the other, i.e., centres that display a perceived lower level of musical development and interest but would benefit from the general motivation and inspiration provided by the program.

While musical need is a primary general determinant, educational objectives must be reconciled with practical considerations if the program is to survive. Education does not take place in a value vacuum, though these values are often silent. In the case of the AYO, the silent component derives from the sponsorship

Figure 5. Sectional rehearsals and daily contact with AYO musicians acting as tutors reinforces and consolidates the learning experience. The percussion program, YACA Bathurst, 2003. (Photograph courtesy AYO, with permission.)

37 Different centres present different challenges. For example, Grafton, 650 kilometres from Sydney, is a long way for six people, their instruments and luggage to travel in one vehicle by road, effectively consuming one day of the rehearsal period; flights direct to Grafton are scarce and rail travel also takes one day. The decision to send the whole group by a combination of plane (to Coffs Harbour) and road (in a hired Tarrago [four-wheel drive]) had massive budgetary implications; however, the quality reputation of the program could not be compromised by financial considerations (Report, Grafton 2003, 6). The two weeks of the program in Darwin in 2002 involved 1200 kms of travelling.
and funding that make the program possible: there are explicit and implicit expectations for ‘success,’ and
the recipient of funds must constantly account for the way in which the funds have been spent; moreover, it
must demonstrate that the funds have been spent to good effect. In New South Wales, AYO has honoured
an ongoing commitment to present two YACA programs per year in the north and south of the State, based
on support from the NSW Ministry of the Arts of AU$12,000 per year. This commitment is realised in part-
nership with the formalised network of Regional Conservatoriums in that State, a strategy that has allowed
the program to develop another planning model, namely, that of returning to the same town or area with a
different ensemble (see Appendix 2).

In New South Wales, the oldest and most populous State in Australia, tertiary music education and most
career opportunities are located in the cities, with regional areas (constituting thirty-five per cent of the land
mass) being serviced by (mainly) pre-tertiary regional conservatoriums. Since 1995 the state has had a Labor
government. The Hon. Robert Carr, who was Premier for over a decade (ten years and four months from 4
April 1995 to 3 August 2005) was strongly committed to cultural development in general and regional cultural
development in particular. In the lead-up to the 2003 election, the Carr government made a commitment to
increase support for the Regional Conservatoriums by providing dedicated funding that enabled this loose
network of institutions to develop into the Association of New South Wales Regional Conservatoriums. Of
the seventeen YACA programs presented or planned in NSW to the end of 2007, all but one (in Broken Hill)
have involved a partnership with a Regional Conservatorium, though not all the latter have yet sponsored
a program.

These institutions have different histories and educational status. Many were established before the
Carr government was elected. Of the seventeen Regional Conservatoriums currently listed on the Regional
Conservatorium Association’s website, eleven are ‘non-affiliated’ community-based institutions, while six
others are aligned to a regional university. They function independently of each other, though they all receive
some administrative and financial assistance from the State’s Department of Education and Training and
cooperate with each other through their representative council meetings. Essentially, they are pre-tertiary
music training centres for school-age students and community members of all ages and at all levels of aspiration,
from pre-school to adult learners. Unlike the accredited tertiary Conservatoriums in the cities, their students

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39 The promotion of AYO objectives and its other programs is another important hidden value governing the actual shape
of the events, serving as an introduction to entry-level programs like the Young Symphonists and National Music Camp (e-mail
from Simon Rogers, January 2005). Essentially, as noted above, the weekend workshops, rehearsals and performances provide
participants with a mini-music camp experience. The AYO ensemble musicians are aware that they are acting as ambassadors for
the organisation, the other AYO programs are introduced to regional participants at seminar sessions by a member of YACA’s
administrative staff, and the AYO program booklet is distributed at all concerts.

39 This model has also been applied in Southeast Queensland, though less extensively and not in an ongoing institutional
partnership: Maryborough (2001 wind) and Hervey Bay (2001 strings); Bundaberg (Wide Bay area, 2003 wind; 2004 strings). To
date, YACA has not yet returned to the same town with the same instrumental combination, though the YACA string program at the
New England Conservatorium of Music in Armidale in 2006 included a return visit to the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium,
which hosted a string program in 2004.

40 Of New South Wales’ total population (estimated at some 6.77 million people in June 2005 [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats,
released 30 June 2006, accessed June 2007]), some 4.3 million live in Sydney, the capital city. The total area of NSW is ca 802,000
sq. km (estimates vary), making NSW the fifth largest state/territory in area.

41 In 2004, the New South Wales government gave over $3.2 million to the Regional Conservatoriums.

play either for enjoyment or to prepare for pre-tertiary music examinations; in some cases they aim to bring students to an appropriate standard of solo or ensemble performance by the end of their schooling to enter a tertiary music program. What they represent in their regional community is a cohesive centre and, thanks to increased funding over recent years, a dedicated building for music making and teaching, employment opportunities for a more comprehensive teaching staff, a base for affiliated ensembles, and a resource centre for performance material (sheet music, band scores and recordings) and instruments. Their primary duty of care is to service their region through outreach programs and links to local schools. As far as the YACA program is concerned, the Regional Conservatorium network of affiliations offers consolidated and potentially cost-free rehearsal and performance venues, a local administrative infrastructure that facilitates forward planning and a point of contact with music students and teachers in the community over larger ‘feeder’ areas.

Although all Regional Conservatoriums have benefited from the injection of increased funding, in some cases enabling a new, dedicated building to be prepared (as, for example, at Coffs Harbour and Lismore), the history of each institution is distinctive and the physical facilities offered vary. Grafton, for example, has a small hall and teaching rooms. The Conservatorium at Tamworth started life with thirteen students, occupying the ground floor of a former Dominican convent, which it shared with the Department of Public Works. By the end of 2004, the Tamworth Regional Conservatorium had 1,000 students, with tuition provided by twenty-two teaching staff on eighteen instruments, including all orchestral instruments as well as guitar and percussion, voice, musicianship and early childhood music, with coaching of sixteen instrumental and vocal ensembles. A similar expansion can be charted for the other Regional Conservatoriums: The local music school at Coffs Harbour was run by an idealistic individual who used several rooms of his cottage to teach instruments, percussion classes were held in a demountable metal shed next door and warehouse space was leased for an early childhood music program. But security and administration were nightmarish, there was insufficient equipment and limited funds. An ingestion of government capital works funding (AU$300,000) enabled a 300-square metre space to be rented in the town’s retail centre. The building has soundproofing, air conditioning and carpet and equipment can be locked away. At the time of YACA’s visit in early 2004, the Regional Conservatorium had over 300 students and twenty staff (mainly casuals). Payroll and filing systems had been put in place, with a salaried director, ad hoc administrative support staff and an annual audit. A resource library has been started for loaning out music. The Conservatorium has developed its own vocal and instrumental ensembles, of which there were none previously; it sends music teachers into primary and secondary schools (a government requirement), and hires out rehearsal space at minimal cost to local ensembles such as the regional brass band and symphony orchestra.

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44 The project in Coffs Harbour in 2004, for example, was able to attract participants from a cluster of Regional Conservatoriums in the area: Coffs Harbour, Armidale and Grafton, and their feeder areas of Port Macquarie, Warrimbi and Wauchope (YACA Program Report, 4). The Grafton program in 2004, the second YACA program in Grafton, attracted 50 participants from across the mid-north coast feeder area of NSW and enabled the formation of a concert band including 43 wind and 10 brass players drawn from Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Lismore and Byron Bay. Programs held in Coffs Harbour (2004), Lismore (2005) and Armidale (2006) serviced complementary feeder areas.


46 For data on Coffs Harbour, see transcript of interview, Margaret Kartomi with Carol Hellmers, Director of the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium, May 2004, Coffs Harbour fieldnotes, pp. 20–23. The original interview tapes and transcripts are held in the School of Music—Conservatorium, Monash University.
one hour’s travel to the north of Coffs Harbour, has 500 students. Community arts organisations still support the Regional Conservatoriums, and have done so over the twenty years or so of the movement’s life (it began to consolidate from the early 1980s, building on earlier ad hoc local efforts).

In the past three years or so, the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums has brought a new level of coordination to its member conservatoriums, for example, through the Music Education Network, a strategic partnership between Arts NSW and the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums in association with the Department of Education and Training. MEN was founded in 2005 with the aim of ‘achieving greater interaction between the organisations of the sector, the regional conservatoriums, touring presenters [including AYO as one of seven presenting organisations] and music practitioners across regional NSW’ and thus improving ‘the delivery of professional music practice and education activities across the region.’

The inaugural YACA program in 1999, which was also the first brass program, was specifically designed to ‘add value’ to an existing brass educational extension program offered by the Orange Regional Music Centre (an established music training institution, now the Orange Regional Conservatorium). This idea of ‘adding value’ to an existing program was one element underpinning AYO’s approach to the NSW ministry for support for the regional conservatorium affiliation. But what exactly can ‘adding value’ mean in terms of short- and long-term benefits to the host community? Short-term goals and benefits are relatively easy to identify, being those contained within the program, concerning the level of mastery and understanding of repertoire studied, the success of the performances and a general enjoyment of the scheduled activities. Short-term objectives are more likely to be measured by successful event outcomes. Long-term objectives are more difficult to define, if only because the membership of youth ensembles, by definition, is constantly changing. Some of the twenty American youth orchestra directors whom Pickney interviewed for her study were even reluctant to set long-term goals for this reason. Tracing an individual’s career trajectory is a way of establishing one kind of long-term benefit, but the percentage of young musicians who find their way into the profession is relatively small. A looser objective, such as inspiring a lifelong love of and involvement with music in the potential audience of the future, is always commendable but harder to document. Community benefits are even vaguer. There is no doubt that the partnership between AYO, YACA and the NSW regional conservatorium network offers a powerful opportunity for both consolidation and expansion of the idea of ‘adding value’; Appendix 2 shows clearly how this potential is systematically exploited in the pattern of return visits and new venues. At the same time, the New South Wales focus of such an expansion, were it to develop, could compromise the original, national demographic challenge. Perhaps for this reason the AYO


48 ORC was born when the Orange Music Association (established in 1989) and Orange Symphony Orchestra merged in 1999; since then student numbers have grown to over 800 <http://www.orangecon.org.au/ORCPages/ORChomepage.htm>, accessed 7 April 2007.

49 YACA Program Report, Tamworth 2001 [p. 4].

50 Carol Hellmers, Artistic Administrator of the YACA wind program in Albury in 2001, argues in the conclusion to her report, ‘It is my belief that the quality of the experience that participants receive from these programs is more important than the number of students who attend. Certainly each and every one of the participants enjoyed an experience that will stay in their memories for a long time to come.’

51 Pickney, ‘Study of Youth Orchestras’ 82. Long-term goals in her study were understood to relate to the ensemble’s development of musical and technical maturity and mastery of more difficult repertoire over time.
Board has decided to continue to offer the original two-stage structure in alternation with the new residential concept each year.

**CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING MULTIPLE SUCCESS MODELS**

Cultural consolidation, as defined within the conventions of European music making, is a process one normally associates with stability: it is the longevity and continuity of the established traditions of European cultural institutions that gives them their authority and a secure framework within which to encompass innovation. By virtue of its mission statement, AYO’s YACA program, by contrast, is built on variability: of venue, participants (AYO and regional), time of year, and tutors. Ongoing continuity and stability are really experienced only at the organisational or managerial level; most other aspects change. Though the same tutors are frequently employed in successive programs (the only other available element of predictability), new opportunities also hypothetically follow when tutors have to be changed. The program has been committed to innovation and experiment within a structured framework, at least over the first five years, as it creates its own traditions. It aims to be at once ‘tight’ and ‘loose’: ‘tight’ in fiscal management and accountability, program planning and review, and event organisation; ‘loose’ in its response to the exigencies of each situation. Different values necessarily operate at different levels of the project: the management (planning) level is strategic, valuing stability, continuity and consolidation; the practical (applied musical educative) level is responsive, valuing flexibility, resourcefulness and adaptability.

How, then, is one to profile the success of the YACA program? Although funding bodies look for specific types of outcomes that satisfy philosophical guidelines or grant requirements, it is, in fact, impossible to extrapolate a single success model. The program’s multiple aims make for variability in outcomes. One model of assessment, however, could be to examine how successfully it resolves some of the tensions that are inherent in its aims and educational objectives, some of which have been referred to in this article: between short-term and long-term community benefits, remoteness and cost effectiveness, national and local, predictable and unpredictable, established ensembles and ad hoc groups, consolidation and expansion, and ‘big city’ and regional assessments of need.

Regarding the educational aims, the tension between ‘upward’ and ‘downward’ aspirations can most clearly be seen in the program’s performance outcomes: between, on the one hand, the pursuit of professional standards of excellence in the playing of the AYO ensemble and, on the other, an ideal of community music making that is ‘open to all,’ in which even pre-requisites of age and standard are not enforced to exclude anyone and in which a definition of ‘excellence’ must be different for each individual participant. ‘Success’ for the AYO ensemble may be clearly defined in terms of the standard of group interaction achieved and those performance events that most closely approximate an ideal. Ensemble musicians are not, however, permitted to pursue the single objective of excellence in performance as they must engage in the interactive part of the program, also playing in the community ensembles as required. The YACA program, as originally conceived, engages AYO participants in an expansive (albeit hybridised) cultural experience, creating its own reality out of a blend of elements that may normally be experienced separately: chamber musicians are taught to learn and perform at standard quickly (skills normally associated with orchestral performance demands); performers are required to teach in a situation that demands maximum flexibility, tact and confidence. For
city-based students emerging from performance-oriented secondary or tertiary educational experiences, the
teaching and tutoring aspects of the program can be challenging.

How is success to be defined for the interactive part of the program? The program’s objective cannot
simply be to encourage capable young musicians to leave regional areas by making them aware of big city
performance opportunities, for to do so would merely reinforce an existing cycle of cultural draining. The
long-term objective must surely be to contribute to the creation of a culture of educational opportunity within
the regional centres themselves, with advantages extending to their rural hinterlands. AYO’s auditioning
process has long accommodated a national ideology. But taking a program, a product (ensemble music-
making) and personnel to a regional or remote area is a very different matter from sending a small panel
of auditioners to another capital city. It is not just a matter of ideology but of logistics, timing and cost. The
focus of the program may be cultural transmission through the teaching and learning of the attributes of
European classical music performance practice, but the logistical underpinnings of that program cannot be
ignored, since they determine choice, partially measure success and govern continuity. Educational idealism
is not enough; it is the encounter of idealism with the practical realities of Australian cultural life that gives
the program its unique character.

Acknowledgements
This article was written as part of the collaborative AYO research project at Monash University’s School of
Music—Conservatorium. My thanks to AYO staff members (Tony Grybowski, Susan Lyons, Simon Rogers and
particularly Bronwyn Lobb) for information and feedback and to Margaret Kartomi for collegial support and
access to her 2004 Coffs Harbour YACA fieldwork transcripts.
## Appendix 1. YACA Program Summary 1999–2005

*Regional Conservatorium*  + One-stage program  + Return visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Centre</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Orange, NSW*                | Brass   | 28 April–1 May 1999          | Population: 17,000  
|                              |         | 28 July–2 August 1999        | Sydney, 250 km east |
| *#Orange, NSW*               | Strings | 14–20 March 2000             | Population: 55,000  
|                              |         | 4–10 July 2000               | Melbourne, 176 km south |
| Shepparton, Vic              | Strings | 21–27 March 2000             | Population: 40,000  
|                              |         | 23–29 May 2000               | Sydney, 450 km south east |
| *Tamworth, NSW*              | Strings | 28 March–3 April 2000        | Population: 12,000  
|                              |         | 20–26 June 2000              | Melbourne, 280 km west |
| Bairnsdale, Vic              | Strings | 28 April–1 May 2000          | Population: 24,000  
|                              |         | 28 June–2 July 2000          | Brisbane, 250 km south |
| Maryborough, Qld             | Wind    | 11–19 March 2001             | Population: 43,000  
|                              |         | 6–14 May 2001                | Canberra, 360 km northwest |
| *Albury, NSW*                | Wind    | 1–9 April 2001               | Population: 30,000  
|                              |         | 6–14 May 2001                | Brisbane, 290 km south |
| Hervey Bay, Qld              | Strings | 26 August–3 September 2001   | Population: 7,000  
|                              |         | 30 September–9 October 2001  | Melbourne, 250 km east |
| *#Tamworth, NSW*             | Brass   | 16–24 September 2001         | Population: 20,000  
|                              |         | 4–13 November 2001           | Hobart, 330 km south |
| Burnie, Tas                  | Brass   | 10–18 March 2002             | Population: 57,600  
|                              |         | 7–15 April 2002              | Sydney, 475 km east |
| *#Albury, NSW*               | Brass   | 31 March–8 April 2002        | Population: 103,500  
|                              |         | 11–20 May 2002               | Closer to Jakarta than to Sydney; to Singapore than Melbourne |
| Wagga Wagga, NSW*            | Brass   | 6–13 October 2002            | Population: 150,000  
|                              |         |                              | Brisbane, 1440 km south |
| +Townsville, Qld             | Strings | 30 June–15 July 2002         | Population: 30,000  
|                              |         |                              | Sydney, 207 km east |
| +Darwin, NT                  | Strings | 30 June–15 July 2002         | Population: 25,000  
|                              |         |                              | Perth, 410 km north-west |


2 Program and performance presentation at the Riverina Conservatorium in Wagga Wagga for the 2002 Groundswell Conference.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Centre</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*#Bathurst, NSW</td>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>27 April–5 May 2003 25 May–2 June 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg, Qld</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>31 August–8 September 2003 5–13 October 2003</td>
<td>Population: 55,000 Brisbane, 370 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Grafton, NSW</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>14–22 September 2003 18–27 October 2003</td>
<td>Population: 18,000 Sydney, 650 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken Hill, NSW</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>15–22 February 2004 18–26 April 2004</td>
<td>Population: 24,500 Sydney, 1,160 km west; Adelaide, 508 km south-west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston, Tas</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>29 February–8 March 2004 13–21 June 2004</td>
<td>Population: 80,000 Hobart, 190 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Coffs Harbour, NSW</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>14–22 March 2004 9–17 May 2004</td>
<td>Population: 75,000 Sydney, 566 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Bundaberg, Qld</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>5–13 September 2004 3–11 October 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*#Grafton, NSW</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>19–27 September 2004 24 October–1 November 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Bendigo, Vic</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>3–18 October 2004</td>
<td>Population: 83,000 Melbourne, 200 km south-east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Ranges, Vic</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>14 October 2004</td>
<td>Melbourne, ca 120 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Lismore, NSW</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>8–16 March 2005 14–22 June 2005</td>
<td>Population: 47,000 Sydney, 820 km south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Castlemaine, Vic</td>
<td>Brass</td>
<td>27 March–11 April 2005</td>
<td>Population: 12,000 Melbourne, 150 km south-east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Goulburn, NSW</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>11–18 September 2005 8–16 October 2005</td>
<td>Population: 24,500 Sydney, 220 km east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+Cairns, Qld</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>23 October–7 November 2005</td>
<td>Population 130,000 Brisbane, 1,750 km south</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 YACA in the Yarra Ranges was a one-day interactive program run within the Bendigo program.


3 One program was offered in 2006 (Armidale, NSW [strings]) and two are on offer in 2007 (Albury, NSW [strings] and Bunbury, Western Australia [wind]). Details of these programs were not available at the time of writing.
### Appendix 2. Patterns of Consolidation and Expansion in the Partnership between AYO, YACA and the Regional Conservatorium Network of New South Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Conservatorium</th>
<th>NSW Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orange Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>1999, 2000</td>
<td>Brass, Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music</td>
<td>Northern inland</td>
<td>2000, 2001</td>
<td>Strings, Brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina Conservatorium of Music (Wagga Wagga)</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Brass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Conservatorium (Bathurst)</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2002, 2003</td>
<td>Wind, Percussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Valley Conservatorium (Grafton)</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>2003, 2004</td>
<td>Brass, Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Conservatorium Arts Centre (Lismore)</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Regional Conservatorium</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Conservatorium of Music (Armidale)</td>
<td>Northern inland</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Strings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During more than a hundred interviews over two years, it became apparent that, apart from some specific exceptions, participants of programs run by the Australian Youth Orchestra were generally acquiescent about the repertoire with which they were presented. Being accepted into the orchestra for the program was their main concern, and thereafter to acquit themselves well during its duration. They were content to leave issues of repertoire selection to the staff, almost as if it were an element in the operational activities of senior management.

This study examines three AYO programs (the National Music Camp, AYO Season 1 and AYO Season 2) with their respective repertoire over nearly thirty years, focusing on the last two. It notes observed trends over this time and attempts to account for the fluctuations in content, repetition of works and perceived successes. Some unexpected stakeholders in repertoire selection are identified and the relative importance of their ‘investments’ are documented.

In her article, ‘First Things First: Selecting Repertoire,’ Hilary Apfelstadt stated that repertoire choice is central to successful music teaching and successful music-making:

[T]he selection of repertoire is the single most important task music educators face before entering the classroom or rehearsal room. Through the repertoire we choose, we not only teach our students curricular content, we also convey our philosophy in terms of what we believe students need to learn to achieve musical growth. Lofty goals are not met through second-rate repertoire. Students are not challenged by vapid musical selections, and though the audience may enjoy being entertained on occasion, we know they and our students deserve more than mere entertainment.¹

Yet, however true this statement might be, it does not necessarily imply that the students—the band or orchestral members themselves—are immediately mindful of the repertoire they are playing, the implications such repertoire might have on their future careers, or its pertinence to their musical development. This current study arose tangentially from some unexpected outcomes of over a hundred interviews undertaken as part of a research team investigation into selected aspects of recent programs run by the Australian Youth Orchestra Inc. (AYO Inc.) during 2004 and 2005. Guardedly qualitative rather than quantitative, the study does not attempt to present a statistical profile or analysis. It is in no way a diagnostic tool: it seeks only to introduce some issues, pertinent to repertoire, which frequently arose in the interviews held with staff, students, administrators, parents and management of five main AYO Inc. events during these two years. Many of these issues raised by the interviewees, or their responses to set questions, were predictable, reflecting the concerns of proto-professionals seeking to enhance their professional profile. This does not in any way make the study redundant. The articulation of these issues through the interviews and its subsequent documentation both moves them from the realm of intuition (what an experienced youth music administrator, for instance, might reasonably expect to find) to the category of potential ‘evidence’. At the same time, the appearance of unexpected trends in the response profiles facilitates the discovery of potentially rich veins of ideas, opinions and anxieties which alone can make such a research exercise invaluable—particularly to the body under scrutiny. Professional bodies such as AYO (Inc.) must, in today’s competitive market, attend the voices of its diverse stakeholders, and this study, it is hoped, will identify where some initial concerns lie.

As demonstrated by the quotation from Apfelstadt above, studies of musical repertoire have traditionally been more concerned with choral than orchestral music. Choirs have been used as a conduit for musical training from primary school through to senior college, thus reaching a wider segment of the population. In addition, many adult choirs are not ‘professional,’ but comprised of volunteers who, although sometimes professionally trained, are fundamentally involved in the activity for the sheer pleasure of singing. Their careers lie elsewhere. Such bodies must sustain both the interest of their members and, consequently, their continued membership. So successful have many of these part-time or ‘amateur’ choirs been that they frequently support professional orchestras in public performances requiring a choral contribution.

The musicological and pedagogical literature has, then, tended to reflect the repertoire concerns of vocal rather than instrumental ensembles. Of the relatively small number of orchestral repertoire studies, very few

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2 Due to the similarity of the name of the management company—Australian Youth Orchestra Incorporated—and the Australian Youth Orchestra itself—these two bodies are distinguished throughout this article.


4 The BBC Singers, for example, is the only full-time choir in the United Kingdom. In Australia, choirs such as the Sydney Philharmonia support the work of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Melbourne Chorale serves the same function with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Both are, however, part-time organisations.
address the repertoire concerns of youth orchestras. One partial substitute for orchestral repertoire studies is found in the literature of discography. But little of this literature, of course, provides a perspective on its efficacy in training the younger player, developing the abilities of the established instrumentalist, or meeting the expectations of composers or conductors. The dearth of serious studies might easily lead to the conclusion that repertoire for youth orchestras—perhaps even for professional orchestras—is not a vitally important issue. Yet the British National Association of Youth Orchestras has worked closely with the publisher Boosey & Hawkes to create a customised catalogue of music suitable for youth orchestras. This, then, clearly has a business impact and it seems equally likely that it also has a pedagogical significance quite beyond what has currently been identified. Apfelstadt’s statement rings as true for the orchestral instrumentalist as it does for the chorister, and potentially more so.

The ultimate predecessor of the AYO Inc. was a music camp first held in Victoria during the summer of 1948. Modelled on its American cousin, started at Interlochen (Michigan) in 1928, it soon became known as the National Music Camp (NMC), and drew talented instrumentalists from across the continent. Becoming increasingly popular over the years, the NMC began, from 1957, to select students to take part in an Australian Youth Orchestra itself. 1970 marked this Orchestra’s first overseas tour, and subsequent international ventures have taken place every second or third year ever since. From 2000, a second ‘season’ of the Australian Youth Orchestra has taken place later in the year, in an effort to increase the visibility of the flagship orchestra. Since 1993 the programs have attracted substantial government funding and the total offerings of AYO Inc. have, accordingly, been expanded. The annual offerings of AYO Inc. now include: NMC, Australian Youth Orchestra Season 1 (hereafter AYO1), Australian Youth Orchestra Season 2 (AYO2), Young Symphonists, New Music Now, and Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA). These programs each year touch the lives of several hundred young musicians most of whom are aged between twelve and twenty-five, although a few of older age are admitted into composer and arts management components of NMC. The strong level of loyalty to the programs is such that many participants return later in their lives, when their professional careers have been established, to work as tutors, directors or conductors.

For this study, the AYO Inc. programs at which interviews were undertaken included: National Music Camp (2004 and 2005), Young Symphonists (2004), and Australian Youth Orchestra Season 1 and Season 2 (2004 and 2005). Reference is also made to another program, New Music Now, which was held in 1999 and for which,

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8 E-mail from Tony Grybowski (former CEO of AYO), 16 August 2006.

9 For details of the YACA programme, see Kay Dreyfus, ‘The Pursuit of Excellence and Social Equity in AYO’s Young Australian Concert Artists Program,’ in this volume, and Margaret Kartomi, ‘A Response to Two Problems in Music Education: The Young Australian Concert Artists Program of the Australian Youth Orchestra,’ *Music Education Research* (forthcoming).
in 2004, interviews were held to assess what impact, in retrospect, various participants believed the program had had on their musical life in the intervening years. Fulfilling Monash University Ethics Committee advice, student feedback has remained anonymous, although evidence is maintained on compact disc recordings, and in some cases transcripts, stored in the confidential archives of the School of Music—Conservatorium, Monash University, Victoria.

The detachment of so many students from such concerns about repertoire as expressed by Hilary Apfelstadt, above, came as a surprise to me. Over a two-year time-frame, most participants interviewed came to the NMC gatherings of AYO Inc., and many were involved subsequently in AYO1 and AYO2. On the basis of the interviews, their primary concern was simply to be accepted into the highly competitive programs and then to acquit themselves meritoriously during their duration. Issues of repertoire choice were, to so many of their minds, the province of senior management. Certainly, a small minority of participants (approximately four percent) were motivated to audition for (or finally attend) an AYO Inc. program based on the attraction of particular works. As one leading member of the Bishop Orchestra at the 2005 NMC commented:

My first experience with AYO was season one, as I said, last year and [repertoire] was, actually, probably the main reason I auditioned for the year: because it’s Mahler Second, *The Resurrection*, which is probably one of my favourite symphonies of all time. It’s played out with 100 people in the orchestra or so . . . which is basically what I think young musicians want to do and need to do.10

Clearly, participants such as this view their involvement in a youth orchestra principally as a springboard to a professional career, rather than as a more nebulous part of their musical development or as a recreation.11

The perceived acquiescence about repertoire by the majority of participants might, perhaps, be termed ‘negotiated’. By this I mean that members might have attended AYO Inc. activities having already been told, and accepted, the published repertoire for the program. In this interpretation, most would not have attended the program had they disliked what was going to be played. So, ‘acquiescence’ becomes ‘acceptance.’ However, such an interpretation does not seem to have been the case with these musicians taking part in AYO Inc. programs. Many participants were not really aware of what the chosen repertoire was for their particular program before they arrived, despite the fact that that information had been readily available in the program booklets and on AYO Inc.’s website. They had, rather, an inbuilt confidence in the repertoire that the AYO’s management would present to them. In fact, the only issue which arose in these interviews which even approximated a complaint regarding repertoire was a desire, expressed by a very small number of players, for earlier release of instrumental parts. They wanted this to allow them to ‘learn the notes’ in their own time, and so to concentrate more fully on interpretation and technique during rehearsals with the conductor.12

10 Student interview, NMC, Melbourne, 4 January 2005. It is perhaps significant that all those who indicated the importance of repertoire to them in their participation in an AYO Inc. program were either in leading-desk positions at the time of the interview, or had many years’ experience of AYO Inc. programs.

11 The tendency to perceive a youth orchestra discretely in either one of two ways—professional training or an advanced form of ‘musical play’—is discussed at length in Ranko Markovic, ‘Jungendorchester: Spielplatz oder Sprungbrett? [The Youth Orchestra: A Playground or a Springboard?],’ *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 59.8–9 (2004): 12–23.

12 They also noted that from their experience and based on anecdotal evidence, the likelihood of participants practising in the post-Christmas period immediately before NMC, in particular, was slim.
Approximately fifteen percent of participants interviewed at the 2005 NMC held at Monash University strongly preferred the pre-release of the orchestral parts. Most other interviewees were ambivalent about when parts should be released, while approximately five percent were highly enthusiastic about having to approach the works from a ‘level playing field,’ with release of parts only at the beginning of the actual program. This last group felt, in particular, that such a practice more accurately reflected the time pressures of a professional orchestra. What is common to both categories of response is the perception of their training as that of a potential, full-time professional orchestral instrumentalist. Is this, in fact, the purpose of a ‘youth orchestra?’ The extent to which this is perceived to be so, directly shapes the nature of the repertoire.

The ‘Youth Orchestra’: A Definition and Range

The term ‘youth orchestra’ can represent many things. In its most basic manifestation a ‘youth orchestra’ may well be a casual weekly gathering of junior musicians who share a common musical interest and no more. No selection criteria are applied, and national approbation is neither sought nor expected. Students attend such events to enjoy music, expand their cultural horizons, and perhaps derive some improvement in their technique at the same time. For this community, being ‘equipped’ with performance experience of Mahler, Strauss, Beethoven or Brahms is not critical. Such players wish to ‘explore’ music, rather than fulfil professional prerequisites.

Traditionally, the younger and the more local the youth music ensemble, the more parental and sibling support are fundamental to the well-being of that organisation. Educational institutions are also often directly involved at this point too, such as the students’ local schools or colleges. This audience is primarily there not for the musical experience per se, but to support their children, students or friends in their many endeavours, whether cultural, sporting or intellectual. The repertoire is selected with regard to the skills of the musicians involved, the potential for enjoyment it provides, and, ideally, the capacity it demonstrates for extending the players’ technique. For the young ensemble musician the musical ‘quality’ of the repertoire probably signifies little, and its educational value even less. They are there to enjoy themselves. If this is accomplished, then an educational purpose has by default been fulfilled: the participant is likely to come back for more.

The more advanced a player becomes, the more the appropriate music programs tend to be independent of their immediate community. They may ‘graduate’ from a school orchestra to a town orchestra and then on to a state youth orchestra. Finally, a national body removes them almost entirely from their day-to-day environment. Each rung up the ladder of performing skills signifies a further step away from their original social milieu. There is potentially a degree of alienation for the young player here, but this is offset by their enthusiasm to develop a new community of peers who are also musicians and who share with them similar hopes and (very importantly) similar anxieties. As one student said of her fellow participants at her very first AYO experience:

They speak my language, they know where I’m coming from. I don’t have to apologise or make excuses. I’m not embarrassed. I just love the music. They understand totally. It is so liberating to be among people like this.3

3 Student interview, Young Symphonists Program, Adelaide, 8 October 2004.
At the same time, the further advanced a player becomes in the youth orchestra network, the less the repertoire he or she plays is predetermined by its suitability for such a body. It takes on an authority of its own, becoming increasingly ‘orchestral repertoire’, not ‘youth orchestra’ repertoire. It is a repertoire that goes beyond the entertaining, and goes beyond issues of easy accessibility or affordability of parts or meeting the technical limitations of the weakest players in the ensemble.

This, then, leads to that other end of the spectrum of common understandings of the ‘youth orchestra’. Here, ‘youth orchestra’ signifies an elite group of highly trained players, many of whom are conservatorium graduates. Most are preparing for a life-long commitment to performance, and many are already fulfilling stand-in calls with professional orchestras. The ‘big works’ are perceived by these players to be an essential component of NMC and the AYO’s two main performance seasons. This study is concerned primarily with the youth orchestra that caters for the budding professional, and throughout this article the definition of ‘youth orchestra’ corresponds closely with that used given by the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO):

By their very definition pre-professional youth orchestras are training the orchestral musicians of the next decades and we therefore consider it both a challenge and our duty to think about and analyse the constant changes that are taking place in musical life, with an aim to preparing the future generations as well as possible for their professional careers.4

‘Pre-professional’ youth orchestras of the EFNYO have a clearly defined musical purpose. They rest solidly on a European model of what constitutes the key repertoire of a fully professional orchestra. The profile of the European Youth Orchestra, for example, demonstrates this canon clearly. Mahler, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Beethoven and Richard Strauss are fundamental ingredients in the training curriculum, offset by a cautious nod towards contemporary music, such as works by Ligeti or John Adams, who, at one stage, enhanced the participants’ experience of his music by accompanying the European Youth Orchestra as its composer-in-residence while on tour.5

Such pre-professional orchestras, in Europe and particularly in North America, are often thoroughly professional bodies in terms of their management. Writer and on-line critic Drew McManus has observed that the average annual budget of thirteen prominent North American youth orchestras he recently scrutinised was $US538,290. Some, such as the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, had annual budgets of well over a million dollars. Not only do some of these orchestras present more concerts per year than their full-time, salaried local counterparts, but their performances are often judged as equal to their professional peers, while the quality of their public promotion is often significantly better.6 The audience—the ‘consumer’—would normally be a key determinant in establishing the repertoire profile for a professional orchestra. But this is

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5 See <http://www.euyo.org.uk/about/overtureEUYO.htm>, accessed 14 July 2006. EUYO has also, at various times, included in its repertoire works by Erkki-Sven Tuur and Arturs Maskats.
not the unambiguous situation it might have been in years past, even for professional orchestras. From such surveys as the Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study of 2002, it is clear that, whatever the form of orchestra, there is no longer such a phenomenon as a regular ‘audience’. For professional orchestras, if anything, the most stable segment of the audience is the retired population; for youth orchestras, the circumstances are even more complex and their primary clients are not, of course, even the audience members but the players themselves.

**The Audition**

For any AYO Inc. program requiring an audition, the playing standard demonstrated in the audition should meet the technical and interpretative demands of the subsequent program. In other words, the demands of the proposed repertoire should be reflected directly in the demands of the audition. Since 2001, AYO Seasons 1 and 2 have been distinct programs from NMC. That is, since 2001 players have no longer been recruited for AYO1 and AYO2 through NMC. Janis Laurs, a tutor and conductor at the 2005 NMC, maintained that it was crucial not to confuse the aims of NMC and the two AYO seasons; while related, they served different communities. Since 2001 the two orchestras convened during NMC—the Bishop and the Alexander—have no longer been ranked. This change was effected in an effort to diversify the talent base of NMC and to place stronger, ‘veteran’ players where they could more effectively help a larger number of more junior players. Keeping the activities distinct also allows those candidates wishing to be part of the ‘elite’ AYO1 and AYO2 seasons to do so, without having to commit the time, year after year, to NMC as well. A showpiece orchestra—the Australian Youth Orchestra—should be, at least for Laurs, as good as it can possibly be, and that can only be achieved if the learning function of NMC is separate from the ‘elite’ performance function of the annual AYO itself. This distinction has been, Laurs observed, a stumbling block for Australians who often define themselves in terms of an egalitarian, rather than an ‘elite’, culture.

At the time of writing, a single AYO Inc. audition process is in place; it is held once a year in each state and territory. This gives the candidate the opportunity—by preference—to audition once for several AYO Inc. programs, or just for an individual program. Although no audition system can ever be perfect, the level of approval of the present system is high among AYO participants, some comparing it favourably to the public music examination systems, such as the Australian Music Examinations Board, Trinity College London and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Students indicated, in interview, that the requirements of the auditions, coupled with the manner in which they were run, were a most realistic training for a future life as an orchestral musician. They identified the orchestral extracts segment of the audition as being particularly relevant to a future career. (By contrast, public examination systems require students to prepare mainly solo works and studies in addition to concertos, most of which do not figure in the life of the rank-and-file ensemble musician.) For so many auditionees, then, the orchestral extracts were the heart of the process. Being requested to replay an extract with greater variation in tempo, phrasing or dynamics, or, for instance, with an alternative bowing technique, did not intimidate the majority of those interviewed. Quite the opposite: they

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18 Interview with Janis Laurs, Melbourne, 14 January 2005.
felt this was their real chance to shine. To be required to replay a musical phrase in a different manner was, a number noted, much like an orchestral rehearsal. It is interesting also to note that, although auditioners are not encouraged to provide feedback to students during their audition, it was this very feedback which drew praise from many participants.

Repertoire, then, must necessarily impinge on the audition, if that audition is seriously taking into account the AYO Inc. programs undertaken as a consequence by the accepted student. This specifically addresses the only criticism of the audition process, aired by approximately fifteen percent of interviewees. Their concern was identical: an inability to understand why in any given year players who had been in leading positions in a previous year’s programs were suddenly seen to ‘fail’ the audition and not be offered a position in an AYO program. Two members of the 2005 AYO auditioning team, however, noted two pertinent reasons for this. First, that the number of candidates offering themselves for audition in any one year can differ markedly from the next, and the number of students of particular instruments accepted into a particular program will be constant. (That is, only the best two oboes may be accepted for a particular program in any year.) As well, there may be candidates who have never been involved in an AYO activity before, who suddenly present themselves and are judged as suitable for a leading position. Second, an individual student’s playing style may be more appropriate for the repertoire presented in one year than another.9

One strong motivation which entices new talent to audition is the attraction of the overseas tour which AYO has traditionally undertaken every second or third year. Despite the cost to the student,20 many instrumentalists who have not been involved with AYO Inc. events in the past present for audition in these years of international tours. This is particularly true for some instruments, such as the flute, where players are many and places are few. The opportunity, therefore, to play with the AYO and to participate in an overseas tour is, in relative terms, perhaps of greater value to such individuals. It comes, however, at a greater cost too, for in the senior age group of the AYO, twenty-two to twenty-five (the maximum), some players are married, have children and are trying to establish themselves professionally. Not all are child prodigies! Due to the popularity of the flute and the limitation of places available, one flautist recounted:

Many flute players don’t get in to AYO until late in their student career, or even immediately after it. By this time they may have established a substantial teaching studio, so taking part in an AYO season, especially the tour, comes at a high price for them. Not only do they have to pay to go, but they lose the income from their students as a result. It’s a ‘double whammy’.21

**Intellectual and Emotional Engagement with Repertoire**

To be sensitive to great literature, in fact, is to be sensitive to movement and rhythm—movement and rhythm as the very creation of the emotion and feeling implicit in the situation . . . works of art enact their moral valuations, they don’t simply state them.22

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9 Interview with Deborah Lander and Jon Tooby (auditioners), 13 August 2005.
20 In recent years participant fees have comprised thirty to forty percent of the total international tour costs.
21 Student interview, AYO1, Sydney, 30 March 2004.
The conviction that a certain level of emotional, intellectual and cultural sophistication is necessary for the effective interpretation of works of high art has become an intellectual truism. While the benefits to young players of scheduling such ‘deep’ works as Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (performed as the AYO2 season in 2005) could long be debated, it should be noted that arguments favouring student involvement in such demanding works have long been entertained in the field of literature. F.R. Leavis, the renowned Professor of English Literature at the University of Cambridge, made such debate an art form in itself during the first half of the twentieth century.23

Highly complex works of the professional orchestral repertoire could well be deemed too sophisticated for a youth orchestra. While the players might be able to *perform* them adequately enough, that they could appreciate or interpret the broader significance and magnitude of such works has sometimes been questioned. Even students of twenty-four or twenty-five years of age may not possess sufficient life experience to facilitate works which demand an interpretation based on deep emotional maturity. This questioning occurred when AYO Inc. scheduled a concert performance of *Tristan und Isolde* as part of its participation in the 2005 Queensland Music Festival. At the planning stage of this event, some members of the company expressed concern, believing that such young students could not handle the technical difficulties of the music or understand the big issues of the music: death, love, despair, anxiety. The conductor of this work, Richard Mills, felt otherwise, however. He maintained that students of this age are themselves highly self-questioning and often angst-ridden: adolescence is a traumatic period emotionally for many young people. Why should they not use *Tristan und Isolde* as a potential mechanism for interpreting their own experiences so far in life, even if such experiences are not as rich as those of, for instance, the forty-year-old Wagner who wrote the work? Fergus Sheils, assistant conductor in this program, took a similar approach, but added that:

> Why do we expect students to interpret the music all the time, when sometimes it goes in the other direction? This musical experience may well enable them to interpret their own lives more confidently. People grow into the interpretation of a work, they don’t just ‘have it’ at any one given time. And even then, it changes for some individuals, becoming something different as the music reflects changing conditions of their lives.24

If education is to be concerned with the qualitative development of an individual’s potential, then while we may not ‘talk-down’ to the inexperienced, we should not cease to ‘talk-up’ to them, drawing them out to possibilities they had not considered for themselves.25

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24 Interview with Fergus Sheil, Brisbane, 12 July 2005.

25 See David Pear, ‘The Educational Theory of G.H. Bantock in the Context of British Educational Thought 1965–1975,’ MEd diss., U of Melbourne, 1999, 109. That there is an ethical dimension to repertoire choice is discussed in June Countryman, ‘Ethical Knowledge and Repertoire Choice,’ *Canadian Music Educator* 46.3 (Spring 2005): 17–20. She concludes: ‘Thinking about repertoire choice from an ethical vantage point has not changed my ideas about the kind of repertoire I use. Rather, it has provided a sense they my musical/pedagogical choices are ethically grounded, and there is both comfort and challenge in that realization.’ (19)
Holding the concentration of players, particularly younger, less experienced participants, is a factor which potentially also impinges on selection of especially demanding repertoire. Long tacet sections, common to the percussion or brass sections in particular, can readily distract inexperienced or less focused players. Should this be taken into account in the identification of repertoire in any given program? Conductor Richard Mills—a former percussionist himself—noted that ‘the reality of percussion playing is that you do have long stretches of bar counting . . . it’s the percussionist’s lot. If AYO is to prepare students for the professional world, then such repertoire is appropriate, because that’s exactly what they are going to experience when they play with full-time orchestras’. Given the right conductor, however, this ‘down time’ for various sections of the orchestra was not a negative issue. As one percussionist noted of Alexander Anissimov’s conducting during the AYO Season 2 2005 in Sydney:

Anissimov was so interesting to watch and hear in his explanations of the music that even if you weren’t playing then it was still informative and interesting. You learnt more about the orchestra at large, and what it meant to be, for instance, an oboist or a violinist.26

For this student, ‘down time’ resulted in ‘consciousness raising’: learning that a non-playing period is not just a time to count bars, but an opportunity to understand more about the orchestra; this could bring with it implications for their own playing and interpretation. More importantly for this article, it indicates that such considerations need not impinge on the selection of repertoire at all, but only if the right conductor is in place.

THE ROLE OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

An important element in the ‘enculturation’ of young musicians in a youth orchestra is the exposure to their own national music, and to music by living composers. This is true of America and Australia, where a shared cultural heritage is less presumed than might be the case, for instance, in Germany or Austria. For such countries, their own music is the ‘default’ music, the orthodox repertoire of orchestras worldwide. The touring repertoire of the Vienna-based Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, for instance, with eighty-six members in its string section alone, ranges from classical music to contemporary music. There is a clear emphasis, however, on the major symphonic works of the romantic and the late-romantic era.27

Preparation and performance of contemporary music is often highly labour-intensive. Its style is also frequently distinct from ‘mainstream’ orchestral repertoire, particularly in the repertoire for smaller, chamber ensembles. Yet students need to be both conscious of this music and to possess a capacity to play it as professionally as more conventional repertoire. Such works tend to be technically, intellectually and physically demanding, often resulting in groups being established to concentrate mainly on contemporary music. Examples in Europe include Germany’s Ensemble Modern Orchestra, founded in 1998,28 which developed out of Ensemble Modern itself, which in turn had arisen from a German youth orchestra. In America there is the Contemporary Youth Orchestra. Resident at Cleveland State University, it is the only North American youth orchestra specialising in contemporary music. For such groups, repertoire has established their identity, yet

26 Student interview, AYO1, Canberra, 12 May 2005.
has not limited them. Current (2006) audition requirements for orchestral vacancies in Ensemble Modern, for instance, require the performance of both a classical romantic concerto, and a concerto composed after 1950. By contrast, however, the websites of such groups focus not on the players, soloists, conductors or even the institution itself, but on what they are actually playing. The Contemporary Youth Orchestra, for instance, claims that:

The goal of CYO is to expose talented young musicians to the challenges of performing and appreciating new music. An educational process evolving from weekly rehearsals during the school year to three fully realized performances each season achieves this goal . . . By the end of the 10th season, CYO will have performed 36 world premieres, all with the composers in attendance. CYO hopes to develop in the professional musicians of tomorrow a sense of celebration of this music and the skills they will need to access the ever-evolving music of our present and future. By exposing young musicians to the infinite possibilities of contemporary orchestral music, we reaffirm its place in our music literature and offer an environment to encourage, explore, and expand the music of our future.

One specific anxiety expressed by a substantial number of the conductors interviewed in this Australian study, as well as many tutors, concerned the rhythmic weakness of young players. Intonation does not seem to be such an issue at this level, but rhythmic insecurity arose repeatedly as an issue in the interviews. In particular, conductors and tutors identified an underdeveloped capacity to mesh with other players’ rhythms when in an ensemble situation. This is perhaps not an issue so much of weak rhythmic training as of a lack of experience in demanding ensemble settings, coupled with a perfectly reasonable musical immaturity. The complexities of contemporary music are particularly unforgiving in this area, suggesting that substantial training in contemporary repertoire is necessary if players are to be ’stretched’ beyond their self-perceived technical proficiency. The New Music Now program run by Youth Music Australia in 1999 appears to have been particularly successful in this regard. One participant in this 1999 program, which integrated many players from the Australian contemporary music group Elision in its teaching and performance schedule, commented:

I had to step up, had to read things I didn’t think I could read before. It was Elision performers as role models [that] was fantastic because they would get up on stage and we could have a concert pretty much every night. It was an hour long; we’d have an instrument featured. We’d literally heard super-musicians play things we thought were impossible before or didn’t know they existed—they were beyond the scope of our imagination.

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32 Of eight conductors interviewed, five noted that rhythm tended to be the major problem for budding orchestral musicians. Keith Crellin, Director of the ’Young Symphonists’ program of AYO Inc., noted that in most AYO Inc. activities his main concern was ’rhythm, rhythm, rhythm’.
33 Held 20 September to 2 October 1999, University of Queensland.
34 Interview with Eugene Ugetti, Melbourne, January 2005. During this two-week event, New Music Now students studied works by Richard Barrett, Denis Cohen, Chris Dench, James Dillon, Franco Donatoni, Brian Ferneyhough, Sandro Gorli, David Hames, Liza Lim, Akira Nishimura and David Young. Not all works were presented in the final concert.
It is, therefore, in the development of contemporary music that rhythm normally manifests itself in a most gruelling and strenuous way, and no more so than music which is intentionally created to test the technical limits of players. According to Elision’s artistic director, Daryl Buckley, this music provides benefits which students cannot gain in the normal orchestral context. He noted that students, particularly those already at a tertiary music institution, have already had to attain some daunting goals to get where they are. Most wish to progress further, and the challenges of contemporary music provide for them not merely new summits to climb, but more excitingly, new musical contradictions to resolve.\(^{35}\)

Buckley found that the Elision residency empowered its participants. It gave them confidence by making them aware of just how much they already knew but did not realise they personally could actualise. Part of the catalyst for this sense of empowerment was the opportunity for young players to witness professional players who were not unlike themselves: a taste of what they themselves might become within two or three years. Equally challenging for the participants was the presence at the workshop of some of the composers of the works on which they were working. These composers were sometimes unable to provide a definitive interpretation of their own compositions, encouraging Elision to confront the young players with an interpretative problem: what do you do when the music seems almost unplayable? What do you do when there is a contradiction in the score? This challenge raised an awareness in the participants that the same questioning should be applied to the interpretation of more traditional works as well.

While participants were given advice on how to extend their understanding of their instrument and how to use it in ways previously unimagined or not required, answers and ‘resolutions’ were not what contributing members of Elision were seeking. They sought an ability to risk, to take on a technical adventure. The sense of adventure—of play—and of improvisation within the confines of a score was new; it ‘threatened’ challenges for participants of this program. Music was approached as a means of ‘interrogating the instrument’, rather than entertaining an audience or giving satisfaction to a performer. Such interrogation could be entertaining, certainly, but such entertainment is the bonus, not the focus, of the performance.

In contrast to the standard orchestra repertoire, this program worked ‘from the inside out’, calling on the players’ ability to define the music through themselves, not for an audience, composer, conductor or critic. Of all activities of the Australian Youth Orchestra, this perhaps exemplified Théophile Gautier’s *l’art pour l’art* more than any other. But for Buckley, its advantages were significant not only for the participants but for the members of Elision, too:

> It broadened the profile of both the group and of the individuals working on the program. Groups like Elision are at the finer edge of musical and visual arts, so this exercise enabled us to work with mainstream classical musicians, and to build bridges with Australian musical infrastructure. It was a validation, and showed the group that they were of greater public ‘use’ than they had otherwise realised.\(^{36}\)

It was, therefore, a program of mutual artistic benefit.

In the broader AYO Inc. programs, such as NMC, AYO1 and AYO2, students approached contemporary music with considerable caution. On one hand, a strong minority considered it virtually a duty to promote

\(^{35}\) Telephone interview with Daryl Buckley, 8 January 2005.

\(^{36}\) Telephone interview with Daryl Buckley, 8 January 2005.
Australian music, a term which for them covered the concept of ‘contemporary’. They saw the AYO, especially when on tour, as a cultural ‘flagship’ for Australia with a unique opportunity to raise international consciousness of national talent. Just as full-time Australian orchestras played Australian composers, so too should the AYO. Five per cent of interviewees did feel that learning Australian works was a ‘worthwhile cause’, but not sufficiently valuable to justify the allocation of significant rehearsal time when the traditional western canon was clearly so extensive. ‘Why learn a relatively unknown Australian work when a masterpiece remained untouched?’ one interviewee noted. Only one student, however, was actively hostile to contemporary Australian music. This student expressed a sense of having been ‘used’ by the process, and by the composers, in an act of ‘self-promotion’. ‘Why’, the student asked, ‘spend hours trying to learn a very difficult work which will only ever be played once?’ For this student, the purpose of NMC was being hijacked by the composers for their own ends.

**Conclusion**

Repertoire issues are clearly determined initially by how a youth orchestra management interprets the function of that particular orchestra. For a wider, pedagogical purpose, and for enjoyment, repertoire choice depends strongly on participant pleasure. Sustaining the interest and involvement of participants in the ensemble is most crucial. If this can be maintained until students have reached a significantly advanced level of performance, then they will be increasingly reluctant to abandon an activity in which they have invested so much time, energy, and very often, a great deal of money. Ideally, they will be prepared progressively to advance their ensemble work in the context of groups which attempt an increasingly exacting repertoire. The definition, however, of ‘pre-professional’ youth orchestra is crucial, and may have ramifications for the public perception of those at the most advanced end of the spectrum of youth orchestras. Indeed, if attracting an audience beyond that of ‘stakeholders’ (for example, parents, friends, teachers) is desired then the name ‘Youth Orchestra’ is possibly a strong disincentive in the public imagination. Given the indication that a fair percentage of concert attendees are there merely to support a partner who wishes to attend, and not because they would normally be there themselves, and while the perception is that they are ‘amateur’, attendances at youth orchestra concerts are likely to remain low. This situation is exacerbated when professional prices are asked for tickets. One way around this, practised by the Australian Youth Orchestra, is to ally itself with the mainstream orchestral seasons, such as those of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Such affiliations bring with them a ready-made audience of regular subscribers, who, as part of their pre-booked collective musical ‘season’, will willingly attend a youth orchestra concert which they might not normally attend as a once-off purchase. These affiliations with fully professional bodies may well be pertinent when seeking public funding and voluntary support: donors like to support and be seen to be associated with ‘winners’ and ‘professionals’—even ‘pre-professionals’.

Threats to the viability of AYO Inc. programs are real: in the current economic climate students frequently find themselves in financial difficulties and need financial support. They are unlikely to invest their time and money in an activity simply because it involves music making. As Janis Laurs, conductor at the 2005 NMC, warned:

37 Student interview, NMC, Canberra, 8 January 2004.
38 Student interview, NMC, Canberra, 6 January 2004.
There's a plethora of summer camps—many in music [and] of a highly respectable nature. National Music Camp itself has to work harder each year at distinguishing itself above other summer camps. It must inspire students, and must offer them something in addition to other summer camps. Many who attend AYO activities are talented in several spheres, so there is a constant possibility of losing them to competitive summer activities, particularly to sporting programs. National Music Camp has, therefore, to offer more than other camps.  

Laurs perceived three ways of doing this. First, by networking, such as through the Young Australian Concert Artists (YACA) program, which provides a direct connection with the community and a chance for talent scouts to identify top-quality students to promote the AYO 'cause'. Second, by ensuring AYO Inc. secures the best staff, who are usually the best performers and teachers. If you have the best staff, Laurs noted, you gain the best students. Not only do they bring their own students into the orbit of the AYO Inc. activities, but their reputation itself brings its own cachet and enhances the already substantial credibility of the programs. Finally, claimed Laurs, if you play the best repertoire, which truly inspires students, then success is a possibility, and the community retains its confidence in the institution. Evidence given in this article indicates that students, teachers, performers and conductors do have substantial confidence in what AYO Inc. does. In financial terms this would be referred to as ‘goodwill’: those intangible elements of a corporation’s assets which cannot be quantified yet are necessarily an essential part of its total profitability. In this case, it manifests as the musical public and education public’s confidence in its judgements as an institution. Such goodwill is, however, fragile and easily lost should an institution not constantly foster it and demonstrate that it deserves its clients’ continued confidence.  

The increasing separation of AYO1 and AYO2 from NMC appears to make sense in emphasising the difference between a pre-professional orchestra and high-quality pedagogic ensembles (NMC’s Bishop, Alexander and other orchestras). Yet most full-time conductors do not perceive their work to be with a youth orchestra as such, which is seen as a pedagogical role. At the NMC of 2006 in Canberra, for instance, the theme was ‘Music and Dance’. Stefan Asbury, the principal conductor for this camp, maintained that he did not wish to conduct the orchestra ‘as a youth orchestra’, with the standard repertoire that such a body would be likely to present. Again, this comment further underlines the distinction between the ‘youth orchestra’ as ‘pre-professional’ orchestra and as pedagogic vehicle, and the need to appoint directors and conductors according to their preparation for either role.  

The present study should generate further profitable areas of study. In particular, there is a need to investigate the broader profile of repertoire experience over the period that students often associate with

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40 Interview with Janis Laurs, Melbourne, 14 January 2005.
41 The commercial importance of ‘goodwill’ is now sometimes acknowledged in financial statements. It is represented by the difference between the purchase price of a company and its ‘book’ value, which can, at least in theory, be greater.
42 Telephone interview with Tony Grybowski, Melbourne, 5 August 2006. Grybowski, Chief Executive Officer of AYO Inc. between 1999 and July 2005, noted that the public reputation of the AYO had become more significant in the last two years. This, he maintained, was reflected in new funding sources and sponsorships, as well as in the involvement of ‘mainstream’ orchestral conductors, such as Oleg Caetani, the Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.
43 Interview with Stefan Asbury, 21 January 2006, and telephone interview with Marshall McGuire, 28 March 2006. McGuire, director of the 2006 NMC, elaborated the point that such works as Weber’s Oberon Overture, Mendelssohn’s Hebrides Overture, Berlioz’s Symphonie fantastique and Britten’s Four Sea Interludes were often seen as typical ‘youth orchestra’ works.
AYO Inc. programs, typically around three years. Against the tendency for participants increasingly to ‘pick and mix’ programs for personal reasons of professional aspiration, program reputation, cost or simple availability is a need to ensure a balanced repertoire ‘diet’ and a suitably comprehensive pre-professional training. There are also other stakeholders in repertoire selection who have not been addressed in this article. An orchestra’s profile is substantially defined by its ability to balance the interests of its various stakeholders. These may or may not include such bodies as the music industry, local professional orchestras seeking to recruit suitably trained players, university departments, and, not insignificantly, the teachers who foster the involvement of so many students in the first place, and who may themselves belong to one or more of the other communities of stakeholders.

As Hilary Apfelstadt stated, repertoire selection is of key importance to music educators. Repertoire acquisition is clearly of an equal importance to the student, although, on the basis of this study, it is not in the immediate cluster of conscious issues motivating students to apply for AYO Inc. programs. The seniority of the students who did express an active appreciation of its importance indicates that repertoire acquisition is a largely passive factor in the selection of programs of most students, whether that program is of pre-professional, or of primarily pedagogic intent. Further study is now needed into balance in the repertoire diet, particularly of aspiring professional players, and how to reconcile the sometimes conflicting expectations of all stakeholders in the youth orchestra enterprise.
Anecdotal evidence suggests substantial benefits to musicians participating in youth orchestras globally. This case study of the Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO) aims to ascertain whether these advantages exist for its members, identifying specifically what these are, and showing how they aid the development of young musicians. Data was collected using surveys, focus groups and interviews in which current performers, alumni, conductors and administrators were closely questioned on a range of issues. Responses, which were overwhelmingly positive, begin to demonstrate the great impact the QYO has had over the years on its more than six thousand participants.

The development of music education in Australia in the second half of the twentieth century created a need for high-quality performance outlets for an increasing number of young musicians. This imperative, combined with the initial work of the National Music Camp Association and the Australian Youth Orchestra, provided the impetus for the establishment of state youth orchestras to nurture and provide opportunities for their youth. There is now at least one such association in each state and most have become known as the pre-eminent youth music organisations in their area. Their educational focus and contributions to cultural life in capital cities and regional areas have been acknowledged by the receipt of grants and funding from local and federal bodies. The level of high-quality mentorship by conductors and tutors has enabled youth orchestras to offer a wide range of varied performances and touring opportunities, in many cases providing members with experiences that last a lifetime.¹ In addition to the capital city youth orchestras, there are many in provincial towns, such as Cairns and Bundaberg in Queensland, as listed by the The Orchestras of Australia Network.²


The youth orchestra sector has grown over many years to be a ‘vibrant and active network that currently makes a significant and valuable contribution to Australia’s music arena and future development.’\(^3\) The extraordinary level of activity of Australian youth orchestras is best highlighted by the fact that every weekend, there are over 2,000 young musicians, ranging from six to twenty-six years of age, participating in a state youth orchestra activity.\(^4\) These facts notwithstanding, the outcomes for young Australians of participation in youth orchestra activities have not previously been defined and addressed in the scholarly literature. A timeline showing the formation of the state-based Australian youth orchestras appears in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Timeline of the Establishment of Australian Youth Orchestras *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>First national music camp run in former army camp on Port Philip Bay, Victoria, organised by Ruth Alexander and John Bishop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>The National Music Camp Association (NMCA) acquired legal status.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) debut in Sydney Town Hall.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Tasmanian Youth Orchestra (TYO) began with Margaret Raywood, in association with Tasmanian Schools Music Association.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966 and ’67</td>
<td>Queensland Youth Orchestra Council (QYOC) founded by John Curro.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Canberra Youth Music (CYM) started by James McCusker.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Sydney Youth Orchestra Association (SYOA) established by Peter Seymour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Western Australian Youth Music (WAYM) association founded by Graham Wood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>South Australian Youth Orchestra formed by David Bishop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Darwin Youth Orchestra (DYO) begun as part of the new Centre for Youth Music within School of Music at the Northern Territory University (Adrian Walter).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Youth Orchestras Australia (YOA) formed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Adelaide Youth Orchestra (AdYO) launched by Heribert Esser.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Compiled by the author using the following sources: Silsbury, ‘Youth Orchestras,’ Warry, *Youth Orchestras Australia*, individual orchestra entries in Warren Bebbington, ed., *Oxford Companion to Australian Music* (Melbourne: OUP, 1997), and the websites of the Australian Youth Orchestra, Tasmanian Youth Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestra, Canberra Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, Sydney Youth Orchestra, Western Australian Youth Music, Darwin Youth Orchestra and Adelaide Youth Orchestra. Some discrepancies exist in sources with regard to foundation dates of some ensembles. This is largely because some began as a separate entity (such as a school group) before changing into a state youth orchestra, or because some began, then disbanded for several years before forming again. The dates given here are the first for which there is clear evidence of a state-based youth orchestra.

\(^3\) Warry, *Youth Orchestras Australia* 13.

Tasmania was the first state to establish its own state-based youth orchestra. Several Australian youth orchestras originated from combined schools' orchestras and, through the ‘driving force of local professional musicians with a commitment to the development of young musicians,’ established themselves as a leading training ground for young musicians. Situational and geographic differences have resulted in variations in concept, growth and activities for each organisation. The number of members reflects the size and population density of the location, as well as the presence of competition, but their core inspiration and mission remain ‘a dedication to the development of Australia’s youth and the music sector.’

The Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO) has been referred to as being ‘in the top handful of youth orchestras in the world.’ Warren Bebbington notes that, following its foundation in 1966, it ‘was soon the best managed and most active of any youth orchestra in Australia.’ Now in its forty-first year, its mission statement is to ‘promote and foster scholarship, interest, enthusiasm and social welfare in the learning, playing and appreciation of music in orchestral and other forms by youth.’ Having the longest serving founder and director and having, at the time of writing, completed ten international tours, the QYO is an ideal youth orchestra for a case study.

QYO owes much of its growth and success to its founder and musical director, John Curro AM OBE, who has brought the ensemble a long way since its origins as a secondary schools’ music festival orchestra forty years ago. Curro is in demand as a conductor and tutor at youth music festivals throughout the world and has conducted many professional orchestras in Australia and overseas. He was the founding director of the North Queensland Opera Festival and has lectured in viola and chamber music at both the University of Queensland and the Queensland Conservatorium. His numerous achievements include the 2002 Don Banks Award from the Australia Council, the 2001 Sir Bernard Heinze Memorial Award, 2000 TOAN lifetime achievement award, and honorary doctorates from both the University of Queensland and the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.

**An Australian Case Study: QYO**

QYO is the name for Queensland’s major training and performance organisation for young musicians aged ten to twenty-three. As with most youth music organisations, it offers a number of different ensembles, including graded orchestras, wind bands and a big band (see Figure 2). Each group has its own program of activities, including rehearsals, tutorials, concerts, camps and tours. The Queensland Youth Symphony (QYS, renamed in 1994: previously QYO1) is the organisation’s flagship orchestra; the big band and chamber orchestra (comprising members of QYS and sometimes the second Queensland Youth Orchestra) were formed specifically for the purpose of regional touring (see below). Three full-time staff, a part-time venue manager, many volunteers and over one hundred professional musicians keep the organisation running,
with invaluable cooperation from the Conservatorium of Music, the Queensland Education Department, the University of Queensland, the Queensland University of Technology and the support of the professional Queensland orchestras.

**Figure 2a.** Summary of QYO (2005 figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Other Activities</th>
<th>Concerts 2003</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO)</td>
<td>National Youth Concerto Competition for strings; hire of library music; 5 scholarships p.a.; manages Old Museum Building which other arts organisations hire on a weekly basis</td>
<td>92 (including 11 NYCC recitals)</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2b.** Summary of QYO ensembles (2005 figures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Ensembles</th>
<th>Age Limit</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Youth Symphony (QYS)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO2)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO3)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior String Ensemble (JSE)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Symphony (WS)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Ensemble (WE)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QYO Chamber Orchestra (QYOCO)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28: mostly comprised of QYS members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QYO Big Band (QYOB)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17: one third comprised of WS and QYS members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remainder of this article investigates various issues relating to the quality of training and benefits provided by QYO in general and QYS in particular. Issues investigated include benefits and disadvantages of membership; repertoire; rehearsals; conductor traits; and career preparation. Perspectives on these various topics were collected from the 2004 members of QYS, conductors, administrators, alumni and other musicians not involved in youth orchestras. To ascertain accurately the responses of each of the groups involved in the research, different data collection methods were used. Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as differentiated by Colin Robson,\(^\text{12}\) were carried out with John Curro, founding artistic director and QYS conductor,\(^\text{13}\) and three conductors of other QYO groups (‘Conductors A, B and C’). Self-completion surveys, seeking responses from individuals, were administered on a group basis to the 2004 QYS members (referred to below as ‘respondents’ as well), from which a total of fifty-seven valid survey responses were obtained for analysis, that is, 56.5 percent of the whole population. Both qualitative and quantitative data was


\(^{13}\) All quotations in this article are from an interview with John Curro, 17 June 2005.
collected, entered into spreadsheets and analysed. Two focus groups were set up. Other sources such as QYO records (annual reports and programs) and publications were also crucial to the research.

Figure 3, below, profiles the gender, age, occupation of members (referred to also as [survey] respondents) of QYS at the time of my research, with their average years of membership, providing an overview of the sample surveyed.

**Figure 3.** Profile of survey respondents

![Figure 3. Profile of survey respondents](image)

Although through my research I gathered information on a range of issues, this article concentrates on reporting perceived benefits of participation in the activities of the QYO, relying particularly on data collected through interviews and discussions with alumni focus groups. The open-ended group discussions of focus groups, which explored collective experiences of participants (identified below as 'participants'), were deemed

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14 The computer program *Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) was used to sort and code data before performing statistical tests. Frequency tables are the simplest form of analysis and summarise the data into the number of respondents answering with each variable for a particular question. Once having dealt with individual variables, the next concern is to look for relationships between variables, that is, to see if a particular distribution of scores is related to the distribution of scores for another variable. Statistical significance gives the probability that a significant result (a relationship between two variables) is not due to chance (but the variables are actually dependent upon one another), with all other things being equal. Cross tabulation ‘displays the joint distribution of two or more variables, usually presented in contingency tables in a matrix format’. See ‘The Orchestras of Australia Network’. Describing distribution of a number of variables simultaneously, each cell shows the number of responses that gave specific combinations of responses, therefore showing the relationship between the questions. A variety of charts is used to provide visual representations of some of these analyses, including some cross-tabulations. Hypothesis tests may be performed on contingency tables to ‘decide whether or not effects are present’ (D.W. Stockburger, *Chi-Square and Tests of Contingency Tables* (Missouri State University, 1998), 1. <http://www.psychstat.missouristate.edu/introbook/sbk28m.htm>, accessed 2 September 2005. The Pearson chi square is commonly used to ‘assess the statistical significance of such relationships in contingency tables’ (Robson, *Real World Research* 418). It is a measure of the degree of association or linkage between the variables in question and exposes the degree of confidence that can be had in accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis (that is, the result could be due to chance). This test is based on differences between the frequencies in different cells and what would be expected if there were no association. Connor-Linton explained this series of mathematical formulas in a more detailed manner than there is scope for in this study. See J. Connor-Linton, *Chi Square Tutorial* (Georgetown University, n.d.) <http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/webtools/web_ch_tut.html>, accessed 7 September 2005. The reader is referred also to Robson’s *Real World Research* for more information.
to be the most appropriate format in which to collect information from alumni, that is, past QYO members. The decision was made to use only those who were working in the music industry (as these had generally kept in contact with the organisation and were therefore traceable). The study was also limited to those currently living in Brisbane for efficiency of conducting research. The establishment of two focus groups increased the coverage of a variety of different musical occupations, and musicians playing a variety of instruments were selected to produce balanced findings. The first group was dedicated to those who held orchestral positions and consisted of current members of The Queensland Orchestra (abbreviated to TQO and referred to in figures as ‘professional orchestral musicians’), the local and only professional orchestra in the state. These participants were members of the Queensland Youth Orchestra during the period 1972 to 1990.

The second focus group comprised musicians working in a range of other occupations within the music industry, including university lecturing, primary and secondary school teaching, management of Education Queensland, freelancing, composition, chamber music, and also a music shop owner and an instrument repairer. This focus group is referred to in figures as ‘other professional musicians.’ These participants were part of the Queensland Youth Orchestra from 1975 to 1995. All participants in focus group one and most in focus group two knew each other and this familiarity, as Robson has noted of his own research, aided communication, promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences with a sense of safety in expressing any concerns. Focus group sessions followed a discussion guide to ensure all appropriate topics were covered in the amount of time given. These guides also contained survey questions, in order to gain concrete data. Consent was obtained from all interviewees and focus group participants before the research was conducted.

Benefits of Participation in Youth Orchestras: Literature Survey

Youth orchestras are identified in a number of overseas sources as providing an ideal environment for musical and social advancement. Not only do they provide substantial, complementary benefits to secondary and tertiary musical training, but young participants develop many non-musical skills as well. What exactly students learn from their involvement in these types of ensembles has been commented on to some extent in the literature. But existing studies are mainly confined to the USA, a country in which school band programs thrive as an integral part of the education system. The main goal of youth orchestras is to teach. Bernard Lurie explains that ‘concerts are only important if they celebrate the results of good teaching and learning.’ Youth orchestras expose musicians to standard orchestral repertoire but many also feel a deep sense of responsibility to living composers, leading to a rich diet of contemporary works, featuring premieres and commissions. These ensembles also provide a vehicle for talented soloists and aim to ‘balance the educational needs of the musicians with audience satisfaction.’ The majority of youth-oriented ensembles are completely independent, although some have connections to professional orchestras and others are affiliated with private schools or conservatoriums. Links to professional orchestras may allow youth orchestra members to observe rehearsals, attend concerts, use players for tutorial staff and sometimes work with their guest conductors or soloists.

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15 Robson, Real World Research 286.
18 Lane, ‘Music for Youth’ 38.
Philippa Kiraly has written that the youth orchestra movement is ‘one of the best kept secrets in terms of what it delivers’—so well kept, that my sources in the literature are, in some cases, twenty years old and more, though the issues and benefits they identify are still currently perceived as relevant. The greatest contribution of youth orchestras is that eighty-five to ninety percent of members who go on to be musically enlightened citizens working in many different fields. Youth orchestras everywhere affect the future culture of their communities as conductors ‘don’t think so much of building future professionals but future audiences.’ The low ticket prices and family connections associated with youth orchestras draw many new audience members to the concert hall and many performers go on to become audience members themselves. The orchestras’ strong commitment to education means collaboration with schools and outreach programs take music to communities who would not normally have the opportunity to hear live symphonic music. They also prove to be valuable training grounds for young conductors and composers, offering a platform from which to start their careers.

Youth orchestras train musicians in stress and crisis management, teaching them to think creatively, to be problem-solvers, disciplined and poised, all character traits that are useful in many walks of life. They also provide a chance for young musicians to meet others with similar interests and can help with building confidence. Members are often able to work with artists from the fields of dance and drama as well as with choirs, opera companies and other musical groups. Both Rena Fruchter and Kiraly identify a link between youth orchestras and high academic achievement.

As reported by Bernard Lurie in 1989, as many as fifty percent of youth orchestra graduates in America intended to pursue some kind of musical career, with their early orchestral experiences teaching them essential facts about the profession, thus enabling them to make an informed decision. Kiraly has also written that musicians’ experience in a youth orchestra helped them make up their minds about playing professionally (see below for my discussion of the link between QYO participation and the choice of a musical or orchestral career). Fruchter reported that some of the conductors she interviewed worried that young musicians might become disillusioned later in tertiary study, where the excitement levels may be lower. Some expressed concern about the dangers of students burning out. Other fears surfaced in regard to competitiveness and the achievement of too much, too soon, but all her interviewees were in agreement that these possible negatives were far outweighed by the actual positives.

Although some youth orchestras may sound professional, they have a very different process of preparation. Fruchter has stated that ‘the difference between youth and professional orchestras is time’ (see the discussion of repertoire below). Repertoire is involved in the discovery process: many members are playing

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23 Lurie, ‘Conducting a Youth Orchestra’ 62.
27 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestras on the Go’ 27.
pieces for the first time. As Fruchter has argued, the ‘proficiency is there, but the maturity of knowing what to do stylistically is not.’ 28 Many youth orchestras play professional repertoire to an exceptional standard, adding all the ‘vitality and enthusiasm of youth’ to their performance. 29 There is a critical dichotomy here: these are young musicians who must be treated as young people who are not yet professionals. In order to be successful, a ‘premier’ youth orchestra must accommodate its players’ needs while still trying to present them as fledgling professionals. Fruchter cited the success of the San Francisco Youth Orchestra, for example, as resting in its strict adherence to high standards and expectations of professionalism from students, and players have responded well to being treated like an adult orchestra. 30

Conductors of youth orchestras have a critical role. For many young musicians, the defining experience of performing a work for the first time will be inextricably linked to the memory of who conducted it. Conductors must at once train and inspire, lead and support and be attentive to the special needs of each section of the orchestra, developing and extending ensemble competence. Kiraly has observed that whereas ‘a great orchestra will play in spite of you, with a youth orchestra you have to know every note of the score.’ 31 Youth orchestra conductors must have excellent training, ability, communication skills, imagination, patience, and be ‘sensitive to the particular needs of young people’. 32 It is important that conductors do not program to their own ambitions, especially when using these ensembles as a stepping-stone in a career, but to the abilities and strengths of their particular ensemble. 33

Youth orchestra activities generally include rehearsals, a wide range of concerts and competitions (many groups holding annual concerto contests), camps, tutorials, master classes, chamber groups, workshops and tours. Although touring is expensive and requires detailed planning and careful management, youth orchestras are now ‘traveling farther, more often and for longer periods.’ 34 Tours unify orchestras more than any other experience, 35 and some ensembles aim to teach participants what it is like to tour in an orchestra that adheres to professional standards. Others use touring as an incentive to keep members in the program. 36

Youth orchestras can be a ‘powerful symbol of unity’ 37 within their communities and touring orchestras can be influential ambassadors for their countries. Youth orchestras are vital to the future health of music education and professional orchestras, as only practical experience can produce ensemble players of the highest standard. 38 As Kari Laitinen explained, the main problem facing twenty-first century youth orchestras is that they now have to work harder to compete for the time and energy of the students they hope to attract. 39

28 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestras on the Go’ 27.
30 Fruchter, ‘Youth Orchestras on the Go’ 28.
33 Lane, ‘Music for Youth’ 45.
37 James Reel ‘The Youth Orchestras of the Americas is a Powerful Symbol of Unity,’ American Bandstand 18.6 (2004): 50.
**QYO Membership: Levels of Enjoyment and Benefits**

QYO is acknowledged by many of its alumni as a great ‘team sport’ (Participant 19), which offers many opportunities through its eight different ensembles, although not necessarily in the diminishing orchestral field. The organisation has been described as a ‘great vehicle to expose youth to that kind of musicianship’ (Participant 18), one that encourages students to see music not just as a potential career, but as an enjoyable experience. Alumni were in agreement that it was a good place for youth to meet and mix with like-minded people of a similar age, forming networks for the future.

John Curro has tried to build QYO in the way the ‘old fashioned residents [conductors] used to,’ helping members to play in time, listen, gain rhythmic accuracy and balance correctly. All conductors interviewed for this study saw their role as that of a teacher, creating ‘educational criteria’ (Conductor B) for their ensemble, choosing beneficial activities and repertoire. Conductor B also saw himself as ‘trying to give a client [student] best value for money’ and making sure students develop into smooth competent players, for easy transition into the next group or the profession.

Figure 4 below shows how influential a variety of issues were in members’ decisions to join this organisation. Other factors noted included the opportunity to work with a full symphony orchestra and in sections with better players, to learn about orchestration, to maintain playing standard for those not studying tertiary music, and because it has been described as ‘the best youth orchestra in the country’ (Respondent 49). Many were inspired to join QYO by their teachers or ex-QYO members. One interesting, yet honest comment from a male brass player was that his motive in joining was ‘for the women’ (Respondent 24). To some extent, the international tour undertaken in 2004 also influenced the majority of people to participate.

**Figure 4.** Issues influencing members’ decisions to join the orchestra

![Figure 4: Issues influencing members' decisions to join the orchestra](image-url)
The conductors commented that not all schools have orchestras or players of similar levels, so QYO provides particular opportunities for ensemble playing, adding that 'if you want to be in a top-notch ensemble, this [QYO] is where you come' (Conductor B). The organisation's reputation and history was also a factor.

Questioned regarding their enjoyment of membership of QYS, sixty-three percent of current member respondents recorded the highest level (on a scale of 1 to 5) with a further thirty percent recording the second highest. Reasons given ranged through the excellent standard of the orchestra, the challenging repertoire offered, inspiring colleagues and conductor, the acquisition of orchestral experience, the social aspect of catching up with friends regularly and meeting people from institutions. The relaxed and productive work environment was also mentioned, as were the opportunities for performance and high quality concert venues. These opinions are best illustrated by the following quotations: 'enjoy playing with such talented people who, mostly, appreciate and love making great music' (Respondent 4) and 'QYO offers the highest level of orchestral experience available to me in Queensland' (Respondent 33). Many noted the continuous encouragement to improve and the challenge and expectation to be a quality ensemble. The organisation's annual reports list the main reasons members leave (other than exceeding the age limit); these include pressure of studies, moving away, working full or part-time, transport problems, parents overseas and sporting commitments. John Curro noted the inevitable fall in numbers after an international tour, with many musicians not re-auditioning. As could be expected, considering QYO participation is voluntary and given the high rate of enjoyment, all participants and respondents felt there were numerous benefits gained from QYO membership. These benefits have been broken down into the following categories: musical, educational, social and other. Under the ‘musical’ category, respondents listed improved intonation, rhythm, balance and blend; making a beautiful sound; developing a high level of technique; playing ‘orchestra’ rather than as soloists; developing a sense of style and phrasing; and improving sight reading, bow control, listening and orchestral awareness, and artistic standard. Under educational benefits, valued attributes were learning repertoire; working effectively; learning together as part of a team; importance/consequences of auditions; hard work mentality and rewards of preparation (individually and collectively); working with others for a better musical outcome and tutorials.

‘Social’ skills included co-operative thinking; ‘getting on with each other’s nasty little tempers’; learning to give and take; and how to work as a section, improving teamwork and effective communication; understanding ‘how an orchestra works in terms of leadership, individual roles and responsibilities’ (Respondent 33); friendship; carrying your weight; responsibility; self-awareness; teambuilding and interpersonal skills. The category of ‘other’ embraced a medley of experiences such as learning to play in different positions within the ensemble; developing leadership skills; acquiring patience; learning from peers; gaining a bigger picture of talent in Queensland; working towards a goal; orchestral etiquette; performance experience; confidence; commitment; love of music; keeping an open mind to a wide variety of music for different instruments; striving for quality; building self-esteem; excitement; networking; encouragement to improve and fun.

The focus group alumni, having successfully broken into the profession, were asked whether they felt that QYO gave them good, all-round preparatory training. Their responses are represented in Figure 5.

Alumni were asked to reflect and list the three activities from which they derived most benefit during their time in QYO. Rehearsing was the only activity mentioned by all participants, even though some said this had been tedious at the time. Other elements seen as useful included tours (with the benefit of being able to repeat concerts and improve upon them, as well as exposure to other cultures), camps, tutorials, section work, friendships, learning repertoire, performances, auditions, concerto opportunities and ensemble experience with other capable players.

The conductors noted the value of learning how to get on with people of different ages. Youth music is perhaps one of the few extra-curricular activities that features such a wide age range. Self-discipline and time-management were also mentioned by all the conductors. By giving a preview of life in a professional orchestra, QYO can provide a pathway to a career in music if that is desired but, perhaps more importantly, it ‘opens eyes musically to see if what you are doing in the practice room does actually have a purpose in an ensemble’ (Conductor C). It removes some frustrations felt at school or university where not all players are of the same standard and not all instrumental parts are covered. On the other hand, it can also help to ‘keep ballooning egos in check,’ teaching one of the tough lessons in life ‘that there is always someone better than you’ (Conductor C). The continuity, social interaction and performance opportunities were also highly valued. One conductor believed that QYO is about ‘working with like-minded, very motivated, self-driven people, striving for excellence in what they do, musical or otherwise’ (Conductor C).

All students gained from a good grounding in orchestral repertoire and techniques and the social aspect of coming together with people from different universities and courses. Some thought that youth orchestras, being free from political and assessment style issues, were better placed to run tours and commission new works, and that they offered a ‘better service than tertiary institutions’ (Respondent 6). Realistically, it was noted that most players ‘will not have solo careers; therefore they need to develop ensemble skills more than individual techniques’ (Respondent 4). Logically, youth orchestras were considered the ‘most important training for those wanting professional orchestral careers’ (Respondent 7). Alumni also noted that QYO participation does give an employer the idea that the person is highly motivated and committed, so it certainly enhances a person’s resume in any field (Participant 17).
At the same time, QYO offers much to those who do not go on to careers in the music profession. John Curro claimed that members ‘leave with a life-long love of music’, while alumni noted how important such people are to sustaining our culture. A unanimous decision was reached that the ‘benefit of those who don’t go on to music is huge’ (Respondent 3). This declaration was explained by the fact that business men come to watch The Queensland Orchestra at work, in the process learning from its dynamics and how members work together. There are striking similarities between the business world and orchestras, as both are high pressure activities that involve relating to others in order to produce outcomes within a fixed time. TQO alumni also noted that music in society is becoming more important as a hobby, with an increase in community music making.

**Improved Playing**

With the vast majority of current members feeling that their playing was improved due to their QYS participation, it was necessary to confirm which particular aspects were aided. The results are shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6.** Aspects of playing improved from QYS participation

As may be seen from Figure 6, ensemble skills were seen by the majority of respondents to have improved significantly due to QYO membership, followed closely by rhythm and stylistic awareness; these were also the issues members felt that John Curro focused on most in rehearsals. Other aspects in which members noted improvement included dynamic contrast, sight reading skills, projection, endurance, section-leading skills (for principals), listening, confidence and technique. Alumni noted similar aspects, adding knowledge of repertoire, part preparation, orchestral awareness, communication and social skills, section playing and following the leader, how to take shortcuts and problem solve, and the ability to handle stressful moments. Conductors felt that heightened knowledge of repertoire and how to play in different styles was gained and one noted, ‘if you have gone right through junior strings to QYS, hopefully you have covered everything you need to know’ (Conductor C). Perhaps most importantly from this perspective, members learn ‘what is required of them in the professional world’ (Conductor C).
Repertoire

Repertoire was a large factor in membership enjoyment and perceived benefit. Many people identified their favourite works covered by the organisation as the large orchestral pieces from the Romantic period and twentieth century, for which QYO is renowned. It was interesting that people from several different generations selected the same works as their favourites, and John Curro admits to recycling certain works because of their suitability or enjoyment and training potential. Curro chooses repertoire carefully, so that players can experience a wide variety of styles during their time in the orchestra.

An interesting discovery was that the alumni, on reflection, were much more inclined to feel that QYO had offered them a sufficiently broad range of repertoire in preparation for the profession, as seen in Figure 7. However, current members of QYS were largely spread on this question.

Figure 7. Is a broader range of repertoire necessary?

Focus group two appreciated the fact that QYO played larger works that the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (precursor of The Queensland Orchestra) did not perform, giving Brisbane audiences the chance to hear works by composers such as Mahler. It was ‘incredible some of the repertoire we used to cover … [it] put us in good stead for the profession to know that we could do that’ (Participant 17). The current professional orchestra players were not unanimous in their agreement that QYO offered a broad range of repertoire, but did comment on the fact that a lot of time was spent listening to other sections rehearse, and that the rehearsal period helped one to grow fond of and remember each work. Many had not made this connection before, but all were supportive of the statement that ‘all my favourite pieces are ones we did in QYO’ (Participant 3). A few voiced concerns about only covering big works that accommodated large numbers of musicians and therefore not enough repertoire from the classical period, but all understood the difficulties of leaving people out in smaller ensembles. Feelings were mixed on the subject of new music too, although some acknowledged ‘it’s a new world we need to be prepared for’ (Respondent 18).

Several of the state-based Australian youth orchestras are commissioning new works and giving premieres (as does the Australian Youth Orchestra). The Sydney Youth Orchestra Association, for example, has a strong commitment to commissioning and performing new Australian works, performing twenty-two works...
in a six-year period. This commitment is an important part of QYO’s ethos, as the Artistic Director wants the ‘best of this and the best of that’ in regards to new and established repertoire. QYS was the first youth orchestra in the country to set up a salaried composer-in-residence scheme, funded by the Australia Council, which ran for three years in the 1980s, before funding was cut. It involved the chosen composer re-locating to Brisbane (if necessary) and attending rehearsals in order to ‘custom-make’ works for each ensemble. Curro believes his players generally come to new works with an open mind; the players’ views are summarised in Figure 8. Curro thinks it would be an advantage for composers to approach a youth orchestra rather than a professional ensemble if wanting a new work performed. Being freer of some of the constraints of the professional ensembles, youth orchestras will ‘find sixteen bassoons . . . and twenty rehearsals if that’s what [the composers] want.’

**Figure 8. Appreciation of contemporary music**

![Pie chart showing appreciation of contemporary music]

Curro does not believe that repertoire is a primary determinant in people’s decision to join QYO and this view was largely reflected in the feelings of current members (see Figure 9), Curro noting that ‘people look at the organization . . . they may like what they see in the programming.’ An underlying feature of a youth orchestra is that often players are performing works for the first time. John Curro believes this to be one of the great things, ‘an in-depth new experience . . . to really get to know a piece.’ Alumni recalled their excitement, saying ‘there is something about playing and discovering [a piece] for the first time which is very special’ (Participant 16).

**QYO and Musical Careers**

As already mentioned above, QYO participation is seen as a logical step for those wishing to pursue a musical career, with over sixty percent of current members expressing this desire. This shows that even though professional career training is not QYO’s main purpose, it appeals to this demographic. The number of members with this goal has varied from generation to generation since, in its early days, orchestral positions

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41 General Manager Survey, Respondent 5, Question 3.1.
were much more attainable. QYO does not have a record of how many alumni have actually found work in the musical profession, but Curro believes the number to be a fairly high percentage. QYO alumni flourish in every professional orchestra in the country, as well as in many overseas orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic. Curro takes pride in a conversation with a Queensland Symphony Orchestra (precursor to TQO) administrator who remarked that no assimilation time was needed when an ex-QYO member joined QSO, as ‘they were there from the first rehearsal, as if they’d been doing it all their lives.’

Also worth noting is the high percentage of Queenslanders who have been accepted into the Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO). Figure 10 demonstrates this number over a five-year period.

Figure 10. Number of Queenslanders in Australian Youth Orchestra Programs, 2001–2005 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AYO Program</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Queensland Members</th>
<th>% of Queenslanders also in QYS in the same year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>AYO season 1</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>AYO season 2</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>AYO season 1</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>AYO season 2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>AYO season 1</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>AYO season 2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>AYO season 1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>AYO season 2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>AYO season 1</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>AYO season 2</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Compiled by the author with information provided by AYO.
Not surprisingly, all of focus group one (TQO) alumni and a high percentage of focus group two alumni were considering an orchestral career at the time they were in QYO. Of these, the majority felt that QYO helped them decide on a career. One TQO member originally pursued another profession, but said it was ‘the memory of QYO that brought me back’ (Participant 3), with other respondents also mentioning the inspiration and motivation that QYO membership gave them. The previously mentioned benefits such as covering much repertoire with many concerts made for an easy conversion, with the audition process giving experience in this crucial area. In some ways, alumni thought QYO ‘painted a glorified view of orchestral life’ (Participant 1), with the excitement and energy not being matched in the real world, but it encouraged them to persevere and keep trying.

**QYO Activities**

QYO has a range of activities in which members participate. Figure 11 shows how respondents see each of these activities as contributing to their musical development. As well as rehearsals, concerts and tutorials, an annual weekend camp for each group (except for QYS in 2004 and 2005) is undertaken in the first term of the year. This camp allows for intensive work to launch the year’s activities. Camps are excellent for social interaction and are placed near the beginning of the year so members can get to know each other and feel comfortable in their sections. Conductor C noted, ‘Once they can communicate socially, they will communicate better musically.’ The same conductor also saw benefits in scheduling an early camp so as to allow members of each section to learn to work as a team and understand musical issues such as tone, balance, blend, and how to lead. QYS voted not to have a camp in 2004, but held a weekend of tutorials in Brisbane. It was heartening to learn that most members still saw the usefulness of a camp. Despite the feeling that ‘we could get just as much done in Brisbane’ (Respondent 2), the members agreed that camps helped consolidate the group musically and socially for the year. The main problems were seen to be distance (the camp was held at the Sunshine or Gold Coasts or New South Wales border) and timing, as it often clashed with The Queensland Orchestra concerts, making it hard for some sections to attract appropriate tutors.

**Figure 11.** Activities responsible for musical development
Regional tours are conducted by most state youth orchestras. In addition, the larger flagship groups that have access to the required high levels of organisation and funding, endeavour to incorporate international tours as part of their program whenever possible, usually every three to five years (often to Asia or Europe). QYS (the flagship orchestra of QYO) generally tours internationally every three or four years and completed its tenth international tour, to Germany and Italy, in July 2004. Other QYO ensembles tour throughout Australia and Queensland; the big band (which tours each year to remote areas of northern Queensland) and chamber orchestra, formed specifically for this purpose, provide the only source of live music in many regional centres. Until 2005 these latter groups did not hold auditions, believing them to be a form of elitism. Other groups such as the Wind Symphony and Ensemble, QYO2 and QYO3 also tour throughout the state or interstate from time to time. As an organisation in receipt of government money, QYO feels it has a duty to use it well and spread it as far as possible.

Curro believes the real benefit of touring lies in the experience of ‘living together in close quarters with no escape,’ having to make allowances for each other, and doing three performances a week (in the case of the last QYS tour) as this allows musicians to ‘consolidate the work you are doing.’ However, QYS does not tour regional Queensland (this is left to the other ensembles), but one conductor claimed QYS should be given this ‘burden’ (as he put it) now that The Queensland Orchestra cannot tour. Those QYS members who had been on a regional chamber orchestra tour found it to be marginally beneficial, being socially ‘fantastic’ but often with ‘repertoire only half interesting’—[we] shouldn’t have to dumb down the program for regional audiences’ (Respondent 11). It was also unfortunate that ‘these tours lead to some fairly ordinary performances’ (Respondent 34) caused by limited rehearsal time. For QYS second players, touring offered a good opportunity for them to gain experience leading, as QYS principals often did not participate in tours. Many noted that they had a chance to play some chamber orchestra repertoire, whereas QYS focuses on the big works.

International touring was seen as more powerfully attractive. As well as providing an enormous benefit to players musically, socially and educationally, such tours provide members with a realistic impression of a strenuous concert tour. Spending time with fellow orchestra members was praised, as was the work leading up to tour and the rewards that came with repeating concerts. Musically, the 2005 tour seemed to provide many other experiences. Playing with other musicians in Germany (some sections required fill-in players in each town), playing in different professional venues, adjusting to different acoustics, learning how to ‘keep performances fresh even when performing the same thing and doing concerts with no chance to practise’ and simply ‘improving a lot by playing every day’ were all stated benefits (Respondent 25). Many respondents also expressed the value of learning ‘all the pros and cons of what touring with a symphony orchestra involves’

42 Of the seven state youth orchestras surveyed by Warry, three (including QYO) listed touring as a core activity, a further one listed touring as ‘essential but not core’, leaving three for whom, for various reasons, touring was ‘not core’. Regional touring was a feature of the activities of six of the seven, the exception being the Darwin YO, for whom touring is simply impracticable, due to the particular geographic and demographic features of the Northern Territory. See <http://www.youthorchestrasaustralia.org/about.htm>.

43 The QYO Big Band was formed in 2000 to undertake tours to Weipa and Far North Queensland, sponsored by Bundaberg Sugar and Comalco. The band has continued to undertake this tour each year with approximately twenty performances annually in various regional towns. In 2003 and 2004, the twenty-seven-member chamber orchestra performed concerts in Brisbane, Noosa, Tweed Heads, Nambour, Maryborough and Bundaberg.

Feeling the demands of having to play in a variety of conditions, often when sick and tired, and going from the extremes of not playing for several days to rehearsing for six hours at a stretch, showed the reality of a touring musician’s life. However it gave members the ‘chance to perform as a professional’ (Respondent 57) and the tour ‘taught me how great being a muso can be’ (Respondent 36). For many members, a tour opened their eyes to the extent of musical culture in Europe and ‘showed how dead classical music is in Australia’ (Respondent 55). It is worth noting that the members were subjected to a far more rigorous rehearsal schedule in the period leading up to their 2004 overseas tour than is usual.

**Conclusions**

It has been demonstrated that the work of the youth orchestra sector provides orchestral and ensemble training that is vital to the future of Australia’s music industry.\(^\text{45}\) Australian Youth Orchestra promotional literature suggests that close to fifty percent of professional orchestral musicians had a state youth orchestra experience and claims that two-thirds have participated in AYO activities.\(^\text{46}\) When casual orchestral players, freelancers, those working in community music, arts administration, orchestral management and music education are added in, not to mention the many that have achieved musical careers overseas, a picture begins to unfold of alumni success. A minority of alumni are in performance positions and the majority are teaching.

The activity of youth orchestra organisations confers substantial and complementary benefits to those offered by secondary schools and tertiary institutions, as well as numerous musical and non-musical benefits to individual participants themselves. The spread of benefits is important to note, as students now recognise that ‘competition for positions with professional orchestras is very tough,’\(^\text{47}\) and most do not join youth orchestras for reasons of career development alone. With symphony orchestras now facing major financial challenges causing amalgamations and cuts, as well as the rapid growth of a range of competitive entertainment forms, youth orchestras are at a critical juncture in their history. At a time when professional orchestras are undertaking internal review processes and the tertiary music sector is facing a period of structural change and evolution, it is more important than ever for youth orchestras to be working effectively and efficiently.\(^\text{48}\)

Examining QYO and QYS in close detail led to some interesting findings; the richness of these is illustrated by various quotations in the preceding discussion. The general consensus was that John Curro’s ‘musicianship combined with his limitless energy and enthusiasm has been largely responsible for the success of the organisation.’\(^\text{49}\) The standard of all groups has risen dramatically over the years, although this has stabilised because QYO now has to compete for players with a growing number of local youth ensembles and the wealth of other student commitments.\(^\text{50}\) However, QYO is seen to have led the way with regard to repertoire, tours and concerts. In Queensland, specifically, the conductor of a Brisbane tertiary music institution claimed that ‘we wouldn’t have been where we are today without QYO’. Its role was compared to that of sport, building

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\(^\text{45}\) Warry, *Youth Orchestras Australia*.

\(^\text{46}\) *Australian Youth Orchestra 2006* [Program booklet] (Sydney: AYO, 2005) 37.


\(^\text{49}\) Queensland Youth Orchestra, ‘The National Youth Strings Concerto Finals,’ program notes, Brisbane, Mayne Hall, 1976, 1.

team spirit and discipline. The voluntary nature of membership led to high levels of enjoyment and a number of participant benefits were noted, producing the generally held belief that QYO is indeed a valuable activity. Musically speaking, QYO helped members improve various elements of their playing, such as knowledge of repertoire, improved rhythm, intonation and ensemble skills. Other benefits included development of a good work ethic, cooperation, discipline and confidence.

QYO continues to fulfil its mission of giving each member a ‘sound basis of ensemble training and as wide a musical and social experience as possible.’\(^{51}\) It is claimed that there is ‘no doubt that a very large number of tertiary music students choose their profession because of their enjoyable and constructive experience with QYO.’\(^{52}\) The esteem in which QYO’s young musicians are held is proved by the large and growing list of illustrious alumni who have made their mark in the world of music, as soloists, chamber and orchestral musicians in every Australian professional orchestra and in performing and teaching all over the world. The long list of achievements of QYO members (as recorded in annual reports) shows that the benefits of participation reach far beyond merely pursuing musical excellence, and assist in supporting the claim that QYO’s ‘overall experience … cannot be found elsewhere’,\(^{53}\) a claim that still holds today, twenty-five years after it was made and forty since the organisation was founded.

**Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank the following for their assistance: Stephen Emmerson, my supervisor at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University; the staff in the Queensland Youth Orchestra office and in particular the General Manager, Geoff Rosbrook; Marc Warry, the Administrator of Youth Orchestras Australia; and the staff of several other Australian youth orchestras. John Curro’s vision, energy and enthusiasm for youth music drew me to this important topic and I thank him for contributing to this study. The participation of QYO’s conductors and alumni and the 2004 Queensland Youth Symphony members who completed the survey was invaluable in giving me a greater understanding of player perspectives. My thanks also go to Dr Kay Dreyfus of the School of Music—Conservatorium, Monash University, for her encouragement and editorial assistance in the preparation of this article.


\(^{52}\) *Queensland Youth Orchestras Council Annual Report*, 1981 5.

### Appendix 1: Queensland Youth Orchestra Timeline

Compiled by the author using sources including Voysey, Queensland Youth Orchestra annual reports, web sites and concert programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major QYO Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Qld Secondary Schools Music Teachers Association (QSSMTA) held a Festival of Music, featuring the ‘Brisbane Secondary Schools Festival Orchestra’ (in City Hall), conducted by John Curro. Larry Sitsky was commissioned to write <em>Apparations</em>. After the festival, players wished to continue working together and a subcommittee of QSSMTA was established to achieve this objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Parents committee changed the name to QYO; participation age raised to twenty-one so tertiary students could join. Second Secondary Schools Festival of Music held. Orchestra performed at Warana Festival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Received first small government grant (and has received state government finance ever since). Third Secondary Schools Festival of Music held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Hosted and performed concert with Canberra Youth Orchestra, before visit to Canberra (first interstate engagement). Performed at Toowoomba Youth Arts Festival, Gold Coast and Brisbane Grammar Centenary Hall. Membership fee of $2 introduced. Passed ABC audition for broadcast. Several members playing with AYO and QSO. Firm attendance policy introduced. Average age 16.5. Tutors employed from QSO for first orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Became independent, adopted constitution and started newsletter (entitled <em>Tutti</em> in 1971). Increasing numbers and variations in standard led to division of players into two groups: QYO1 (seventy members) and QYO Training Orchestra (fifty members, led by Elizabeth Morgan). Camp held at Southport. Rehearsals in Holy Trinity Church, the Valley (previously Brisbane Grammar School, West End Studio and St Andrews). Tape recordings of concerts made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Division into three orchestras: third or junior orchestra under Richard Mills (twenty-three members), training orchestra led by Brian Stevenson. Total membership 140. In early years, many conductors showed support and took rehearsals, such as Max Olding and Ian Mckinley. Regular lessons with a teacher a pre-requisite for membership. First year each member was re-auditioned. Fundraising for money for suitable premises. Small casual chamber orchestra formed. Australia Council finance for tutorials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Major QYO Events</td>
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</table>
| 1972 | First international tour  
On the advice of Ezra Rachlin (resident QSO conductor), QYOI auditioned for International Festival of Youth Orchestras (held in Lassaune, Switzerland). Concerts also in Germany, Italy and UK. First orchestra from Australia to be accepted. Combined with QSO for ABC concert (Sibelius 2nd Symphony). Played at Gold Coast, Stanthorpe, Nambour and Innisfail. |
| 1973 | Wind Ensemble established with Rodney Jacobson to provide ensemble opportunities for increasing numbers of wind applicants. Chris Andrews took over training orchestra and Geoff Grantham, the junior orchestra. Attended Canberra Winter Youth Festival and played combined concert with Tasmania Youth Orchestra in Brisbane. Music in the Round concert with harpsichord. |
| 1974 | Establishment of QYO office and full-time paid secretary/librarian. Visit from Long Island Youth Orchestra (New York). Tour of Eastern States (Sydney, Hobart, Canberra, Melbourne—participated in Melbourne Festival of Youth Orchestras). Combined QYO1 and QSO concert, performances also at Toowoomba City Hall and Mayne Hall, University of Qld. |
| 1975 | Junior String Ensemble established, led by Monica Paulsen, to cater for beginner strings and provide more intensive training than could be given in the junior orchestra. Names changed to QYO1, 2, 3 respectively. Participated in ABC’s first Prom concert with QSO (Patrick Thomas). Travelled to Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Townsville for school and evening concerts. |
| 1976 | Second international tour  
Tenth anniversary. International Festival of Youth Orchestras, touring to Florence, Rome, Aberdeen and London. Thirty-three QYO members selected to take part in the International Youth Orchestra formed at the festival. Establishment of National Youth Concerto Competition, for string soloists up to eighteen years. QYO members playing in the Innisfail North Queensland Opera Festival. Performances at Toowoomba and Southport. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major QYO Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Move to Elphinstone building (Ann Street): unifying to have all groups together. Rick Thompson appointed as first full-time administrator. QYO1 toured Sydney and Canberra, concert for Sir Zelman Cowen, performed Prokofiev’s <em>Peter and the Wolf</em> with Peter Ustinov (narrator) and Wind Ensemble gave its own concert. Peter Coombes took over junior orchestra. UTAH foundation grant of $10,000 for purchase of music for library. Played for Moscow Circus, interludes at Beach Boys Concert. QYO open day and MUSART (fundraisers). Televised performances of Northern Territory songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Premier’s special command performance with Rolf Harris. Participated in thirtieth Australian Intervarsity Choral Festival and benefit for Save the Children Fund. Visit from Hamelin Youth Orchestra (Germany). Training orchestra tour to Maryborough, Gympie and Bundaberg (first time an orchestra other than QYO1 had been on tour). Television special on Channel 7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1980 | *Third international tour*  
Third visit to International Festival of Youth Orchestras (Aberdeen), this time as host orchestra. Performance with Rolf Harris of *Coojee and the Monster*, especially composed. Audience of 3,500 in London, billed as ‘one of the most distinctive groups on the world circuit.’ Ability to raise over $200,000 for tour shows high community regard. Formation of business advisory committee responsible for raising large proportion of funds for overseas tour. |
| 1981 | Successful QYO1 subscription series, joined with four Brisbane choirs for Brahms’s *A German Requiem*. Wind and percussion groups gave concerts outside Brisbane for first time (in Roma and Charleville). Hosted Edmonton Youth Orchestra (Canada). QYO frequently travelled to country centres. Well-known conductors showed interest by support, such as Wilfred Lehmann, Juan Mateucci, Tibor Paul, Sir Bernard Heinze, Walter Susskind, James Robertson, Martin Dreiwitz, Shunsaka Tsutsumi and Oskar Danon. |
| 1982 | *Fourth international tour*  
Commonwealth Youth Concerto Competition (held in conjunction with Commonwealth Games). Commission by Mills with massed choir for Games. Toured New Zealand. *Coojee and the Monster* available on commercially produced cassette. |
| 1983 | *Fifth international tour*  
Orchestra so impressed Zhao Ziyang, Premier of People’s Republic of China, that he invited it on a tour paid for by the Chinese government. Successful five-week tour to Asia as result of increased government interest in region. Concert televised in Tokyo. Silver Jubilee awarded to QYO for its contribution to international relations. First performance of Mahler symphony. Chamber music program organised by Robert Harris. |
<table>
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<th>Major QYO Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>National Youth Concerto Competition finalists gave recitals in preceding week. Fifty players auditioned and formed ten to fifteen chamber groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Established association of Qld Youth Orchestras. All groups participated in opening of Qld’s new performing arts centre (QPAC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td><em>Sixth international tour</em> QYO1 toured New Zealand, after invitation from Christchurch Symphony Orchestra to join them in Mahler’s Symphony no 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Peter Rankine is composer-in-residence. Distinguished past players from all round world and every ABC orchestra formed alumni orchestra to celebrate QYO’s coming of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>An International Festival of Youth Orchestras hosted by Brisbane (first time outside Europe) was QYO’s contribution to Australia’s Bicentenary: 800 young musicians from six countries, who then toured across Australia. The Wind Ensemble, Junior Strings and Percussion groups played at World Expo. QYO1 was joined by Yehudi Menuhin, who praised high standard of orchestra, ‘it is as good a youth orchestra, if not better, than any I have played with.’ First cooperative venture with Brisbane Chorale performing Britten’s <em>War Requiem</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Moved into Old Museum Building, first venue QYO could call home. Structural and acoustic problems were later improved after major refurbishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td><em>Seventh international tour</em> ‘Pacific Rim’ tour to Canada, China, Japan, Hong Kong. Name change to QYSO. Wind Ensemble conductor Dr Roy Thompson formed jazz group. QYSO’s first trombone (Jason Redman) was youngest ever to become a section leader with ABC orchestra (QSO). World premiere of Thomas McKinley’s 6th symphony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>QPAC gala concert with Premier and patron, Sir Zelman Cowen. Both guests emphasised QYO’s important contribution to youth music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Major QYO Events</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Renamed QYS. Due to lack of government funding, planned international tour became a tour of Australian capital cities. Used smaller ensembles (such as chamber orchestra) instead of QYO2 to undertake regional touring in partnership with major corporate sponsors. Britten's <em>War Requiem</em> performed with Brisbane Chorale. Work on concert hall. Musicians-in-residence with 4MBS Classic FM Radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Conductor Chris Andrews left after 24 years; QYO2 taken over by David Banney. Performances with Jane Rutter and Diana Doherty. No longer used members of QYS as soloists for subscription series, employing professional soloists to boost sales but started ‘concerts in cathedral’ for students to perform their solos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1996 | *Eighth international tour*  
Expanded community involvement included Save the Children Fund concerts. Tour to Japan and South Korea. 30th birthday concert at City Hall. First CD. Performed with Piers Lane, Rolf Harris and Richard Tognetti. Conductor auditions for QYO2 and 3. |
| 1997 | Strategic planning sessions to focus on goals and executive committee formed. Percussion ensemble disbanded. |
| 1998 | Bradley Voltz and Tanya Simmons took over QYO2 and 3 after conductors left for further study in Europe. Katrina Mothershaw took over the Wind Ensemble, which became the precursor of the newly named Wind Symphony. |
| 1999 | Concert hall acoustic work completed, venue manager employed to handle corporate bookings of space. *Carmina Burana* with State and Municipal choir. Premiere of O’Boyle’s *River Symphony*. Sunday Mail newspaper compared QYS to the Australian Chamber Orchestra in terms of consistent high performance standards. |
| 2000 | *Ninth international tour*  
After a break of twenty years, triumphant return to Europe, standing ovations in every country toured (South Korea, Parma, Gardone Riviera, Austria, Hanover and World Expo). Played with soloists in Korea, along with Jeff Crellin, Sarah Curro, Monique Dupill, with a commission from Lehmann. Formation of Big Band with Andrew Bell to tour regionally. |
<p>| 2001 | Registered trading name of Queensland Youth Orchestras (that is, dropped ‘Council’). Opened Goodwill Games. Centenary of Federation concerts. Tour to Tasmania for Festival of Youth Orchestras. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major QYO Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>John Curro’s 70th Birthday alumni concert, performed Mahler’s Symphony no. 1, largest ever orchestra assembled at QPAC (142). Members from Europe, Asia, US and throughout Australia involved. Richard Grantham wrote commemorative work for occasion. Visits from the Colorado Springs and Transylvania Youth Orchestras and Ulm Concert Band. Accompanied Italian pianist Michele Campanella and Dene Olding (concertmaster of Sydney Symphony Orchestra and ex-QYO member).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Chamber music series (Richard Haynes). First subscription concert dedicated to memory of cellist Cameron Retchford (alumnus).</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 2004 | **Tenb international tour**  
Tour to Germany and Italy. Performance on River stage with rock group The Whitlams. |
| 2005 | Collaboration with Brisbane Chorale in Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast*. |
| 2006 | 40th birthday of QYO, planned alumni concert in December featuring Holst’s *The Planets*. |
This article traces the development of a ‘contrapuntal’ ethic in the work of the Palestinian-American literary critic Edward Said, and the application of this ethic through the formation of the youth orchestra, West-Eastern Divan, a project initiated by Said with the Argentinean-Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim. It assesses what happens when a theoretical conception of music’s ethical potential is used to intervene in the politically charged environment of the Middle East.

Youth orchestras and literary theory are not regular bedfellows. However, in the case of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, formed by a collaboration between the literary critic and Palestinian activist Edward Said and the Argentinean-Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim, we have the unusual case of an argument about literary criticism being transformed by a set of intellectual and biographical turns into the conception for a youth orchestra. There are many interesting questions raised by Said’s and Barenboim’s decision to bring together young Arab and Israeli musicians in Weimar in 1999. This article will not tell the narrative of the orchestra’s formation, but rather of how its formation was an attempt to execute particular ideas about music’s ethical potential. It is about how a youth orchestra might serve as the embodiment of an idea and/or ideal. This may seem an oblique way of considering the social role of youth orchestras, especially considering that this youth orchestra in particular is so well positioned to have a substantial social impact. As it is easy to romanticise the idea of groups of young people playing music together, it is important that we look deeply into the ethical implications of a youth orchestra that orients itself towards a geo-political crisis.

Said’s Contrapuntal Criticism

Most people familiar with Said’s work know that he published a book on music (Musical Elaborations, 1991) but few are aware that musical ideas appear in just about all his major publications after Orientalism (1978).
Reading the many tributes to Said following his death in 2003, the general consensus seems to be that musical criticism is the jewel in Said’s crown as a postcolonial ‘Renaissance Man’. Yet if we look at Said’s key works after Orientalism, particularly The World, the Text and the Critic (1983), Culture and Imperialism (1993) and Humanism and Democratic Criticism (2004), we see quite clearly that ideas about music come to occupy a central place in his intellectual work. I do not have space here to give a comprehensive account of this process, so I will focus on the definitive term of Said’s musical criticism: his use of the term ‘contrapuntal’ as a steering analogy for critiquing the relationship between culture and imperialism.

At face value Said’s decision to use a technical term from European elite music seems an odd response to the problems of representation and authority he identifies in Orientalism. Towards the end of that book Said writes: ‘My project has been to describe a particular system of ideas, not by any means to displace the system with a new one. In addition, I have attempted to raise a whole set of questions that are relevant in discussing the problems of human experience: How does one represent other cultures?’ To understand why Said believes that contrapuntal music might present the path towards a new system of representation we need to look at the introduction of the term in his subsequent works The World, the Text and the Critic and Musical Elaborations. In the former book Said suggests that the theoretical currents leading out of Foucault and Derrida had produced an ethically impotent criticism that was confined by a limited notion of the absolute boundaries of language—what Said calls ‘the labyrinth of textuality’. In place of discourse analysis and deconstruction, Said puts forward the notion of ‘critical consciousness’: a kind of consciousness that is always aware of the non-textual, ‘worldly’ affiliations of ideas to power. Said sees music as a conceptual mediator between critical consciousness and worldly knowledge, as its content, no matter how systematic, cannot be reduced to theoretical systems; it occupies the remainder between theory and experience.

In The World, the Text, and the Critic, he gestures towards the critical potential of various musical forms, though he uses musical analogies tentatively. In Musical Elaborations Said explains why contrapuntal music might play a unique role in developing critical consciousness. He claims that contrapuntal forms—exemplified by Bach, and more particularly Glenn Gould’s playing of Bach—present an ‘alternative formation’ in European elite music, entirely separate from the sonata form of symphonies and concertos in which, he claims, strict harmonic relationships ‘coerce’ the melodic material. In a key moment in Musical Elaborations Said refers to the ‘critical force’ that exists within the tradition of European elite music that subverts, it is implied, its own provincialism and which moves towards a universal experience.

It is on the basis of counterpoint’s integral ‘critical force’ that Said uses it to think through the relationship between colonial and anti-colonial texts over time in Culture and Imperialism. As contrapuntal music presents Said with an aesthetic form that lies beyond the grasp of imperialism’s conquest of culture, it can be invoked to represent a truly post-imperial criticism. In terms of the structure of the book, this ‘global, contrapuntal analysis’ consists of the juxtaposition of nineteenth and early twentieth-century European novels with twentieth-century anti-colonial theory and literature. He argues that although in many situations there

are no textual traces of the resistance to colonialism, anti-colonial thinkers nevertheless emerged from real abuses and struggles, struggles that must always be partly imagined.

**The Palestinian/Israeli Crisis as ‘Late Style’ Colonialism**

In the last decade of his life Said increasingly turned to music when discussing the political situation in Palestine and Israel. Given his high profile as a critic of Israel and activist for the Palestinian cause, this inevitably led to an increase in political pressure on his musical ideas. His conception of the ethical potential of music was no longer circulating in the relatively fluid domain of critical theory, but moving towards the relentlessly literal domain of politics. Despite this shift, the critical framework Said established in his earlier writing on music is immediately recognisable.

In interviews Said repeatedly speaks about the situation in Palestine as a conflict of opposing, irreconcilable histories. He describes it as a ‘tragic’ ‘symphony’ in which the two sides—‘opposites in the Hegelian sense’—endlessly antagonise each other in the hope of resolution. In *Musical Elaborations*, Said refers several times to sonata form as a coercive structure that compromises the autonomy of individual melodic units, so this symphonic analogy is hardly flippant. The situation is tragic because both sides strive for a ‘symphonic’ resolution that, as he contends in regard to the recapitulation, can only remain an illusion of reconciliation.

Said repeatedly characterises the opposition of Israelis and Palestinians in the Manichean terms of coloniser/colonised developed by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Said’s Palestinian reacts to the situation with the same psychological compulsion to harm and displace the colonial master as Fanon’s ‘native’. Said writes, ‘What can Palestinians harbor in their hearts and minds? Not only a feeling of “I want it to stop,” but a feeling of “I want my turn,” of “one day you’re going to get it”.’ In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that Fanon ultimately turns away from a dialectic of subjugation and revenge towards a new humanism: the ‘immense cultural shift from the terrain of nationalist independence to the theoretical domain of liberation’. By steering a new path away from imperialism and orthodox nationalism, Fanon plays the ‘contrapuntal’ role, as it were, that leads to an authentic, post-imperial universalism.

By framing the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in musical terms, Said hoped to intervene in the same emancipatory ‘contrapuntal’ role. Indeed, the discussion of Fanon and nationalism in *Culture and Imperialism* came during a period in which Said was revising his views on Palestine. In the 1980s Said was a strong advocate of an independent Palestinian state, believing that Palestinians needed a secure connection to their ancestral lands. The shift Fanon represents in *Culture and Imperialism* from ‘nationalist independence to the theoretical domain of liberation’, mirrors Said’s turn away from the idea of an independent Palestinian state in the 1990s. (I am not suggesting that Said’s rejection of the idea of a separate Palestinian state, which was primarily caused by his disillusionment following the Oslo peace accords, was only theoretical. However, in revising his political position, the example of Fanon was undoubtedly in his mind.) Said became convinced that a

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9 See Said, *Power, Politics and Culture* 313, and also 287–89.
10 Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 268.
bi-national one-state solution could be the only way of avoiding the impasse of ethnicity-based nationalism. He conceptualised a state structure in which Israelis and Palestinians would not live ‘in a state of extremism and impossibly aggressive opposition but rather in some state of maintained coexistence … It points to musical metaphors of one sort or another—the contrapuntal, for example—rather than a grand Hegelian solution of synthesis’. \(^{11}\) This is exactly what Said meant when he talked about Fanon’s embryonic conception of a ‘non-adversarial community of awareness’ in Culture and Imperialism. \(^{12}\)

Said’s contrapuntal trope suggests itself to the Palestinian/Israeli context because of the peculiar circumstances of the conflict. The central importance of Jewish victimhood in the founding of the state of Israel exponentially complicates the politics of imperialism involved. Said’s characterisation of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship in Hegelian terms as ‘master and slave’ is mediated by the same dialectic of domination that Jews had been subjected to in Europe. \(^{13}\) Said believes that the overlay of such dialectics had formed a web of antagonism and retrospective pity that was both irreversible and irreconcilable. The central importance of Adorno’s writings on music to Said is apparent here. Said’s increasing fixation on the idea of ‘late style’, which he identifies as the essential characteristic of Adorno’s work, impels many of his comments on Middle-Eastern politics. \(^{14}\) Just as Beethoven’s late style presents Adorno with a fragmented landscape in which elements remain ‘unreconciled, uncoopted by a higher synthesis’, \(^{15}\) Said claims that ‘irreconcilability has always been essential as a way of characterizing the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians’. \(^{16}\) The Palestinian/Israeli conflict is thus, for Said, a kind of ‘late style’ colonialism. If one cannot ‘transcend or lift oneself out of lateness, but … only deepen the lateness’, then any intervention into the Palestinian/Israeli conflict must adopt a ‘late style’ ethics. \(^{17}\)

The conceptual basis for this ethics can be located in Said’s reading of Adorno’s Philosophy of Modern Music. Said claims that Adorno’s critique of Schoenberg’s twelve-tone system is taken ‘almost verbatim from Lukács’s drama of the subject-object impasse’. Each moment Lukács proposes the possibility of synthesis, however, ‘Adorno has Schoenberg turn [the possibility of synthesis] down’. \(^{18}\) The musical analogy Said is adapting from Adorno here is not contrapuntal but atonal. \(^{19}\) The rolling crisis in Palestine, Said believes, follows the same ‘atonal’ pattern of perpetually delayed synthesis.

There are two connections to Said’s earlier work that are helpful in thinking about the ‘atonal’ aspect of late style. In After the Last Sky (1986) Said uses the term ‘atonal’ to describe both the geographical condition of modern Palestine and the peculiar form of Palestinian subjectivity caused by displacement. Elegising the

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\(^{12}\) Said, Culture and Imperialism 274.

\(^{13}\) Said, Power, Politics and Culture 434.


\(^{15}\) Said, On Late Style 12.

\(^{16}\) Bayoumi and Rubin, Edward Said Reader 427.

\(^{17}\) Said, On Late Style 13.

\(^{18}\) Said, On Late Style 18.

\(^{19}\) It should be noted that Adorno considers that Schoenberg’s dodecaphonic system takes the contrapuntal idea of integration to an absolute point; it is the realisation of pure counterpoint. See Theodor Adorno, ‘Function of Counterpoint,’ Philosophy of Modern Music, transl. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Bloomster (London: Sheed & Ward, 1973) 94–95.
fragmentary nature of the Palestinian territories, he comments that Palestinian spaces ‘represent building without overall purpose, around an uncharted and only partially surveyed territory. Without a center: Atonal.’

A year earlier in his well-known essay, ‘Reflections on Exile’, Said spoke about the ‘contrapuntal’ ‘awareness’ that comes with the condition of exile.

In the final chapter of *Culture and Imperialism* Said attempts to combine the contrapuntal and atonal: here an atonal counterpoint is seen as an ideal way of renewing the universal framework of comparative literature. He writes that a ‘global, contrapuntal analysis should be modelled not (as earlier notions of comparative literature were) on a symphony but rather on an atonal ensemble; we must take into account all sorts of spatial or geographical and rhetorical practices . . . all of them tending to elucidate a complex uneven topography.’ The shift mid-sentence from musical to geographical terms reveals Said’s attempt to adapt his universal idea of counterpoint to a post-colonial/neo-colonial situation in which a coherent (that is, ‘symphonic’) arrangement of national identities is untenable. In trying to find an alternative to a symphonic model, Said awkwardly applies a harmonic term to orchestration. This mixed metaphor is not bad writing, so much as a symptom of the kind of collisions that are occurring in Said’s musical thinking. Music now refers to constituencies not critical strategies. In the time between *After the Last Sky* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said transforms ‘atonal’ from an analogy which signals dispossession and powerlessness to an ideal for a new universality. The projection of atonality onto counterpoint also mirrors Said’s turn towards the one-state solution, which becomes a microcosm for the enactment of a humanistic post-imperial ethics.

**The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra**

Said’s collaboration with Daniel Barenboim to form the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra thus attempted to realise an ‘atonal ensemble’. It would instrumentalise the ethical potential of music along the lines Said had developed in the 1980s and 1990s. The atonal model he proposed for comparative literature played an important role in launching the orchestra. The aside in *Culture and Imperialism* quoted above about symphonic models for comparative literature refers to Goethe’s concept of *Weltliteratur*. The youth orchestra, which takes its name from Goethe’s set of poems *West-östlicher Diwan*, was first formed to be a part of the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of Goethe’s birth in Weimar. The orchestra, which has convened every year since the Weimar workshop in 1999, is made up of young Arab, Israeli and a few European musicians. For obvious practical reasons having to do with Barenboim’s involvement, the ensemble is a symphony orchestra, contradicting Said’s tendency to align symphonic music with administrative social systems; its ‘atonal’ aspect relates to the constituencies of the musicians involved.

The idea, as Said and Barenboim articulate it in their interviews and conversations and in promotional material for the orchestra, is to draw together musicians from various places in the Middle East without trying to artificially dissolve the political antagonisms involved. Music as a non-representational medium provides an arena in which communication is possible without immediately veering into hostility. Said and Barenboim contend that as the focus is on performance the musicians are then free to talk about the political situation.

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22 Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 318.
that brings them together without a sense of needing to create some piecemeal manifesto of togetherness. The ideal of musical autonomy therefore plays a direct interventionary role as a ‘late style’ answer to Middle-Eastern politics. It is ironic that the intellectual who was attacked so vehemently for politicising humanities faculties should use the notion of aesthetic autonomy to respond to the political deadlock in Palestine.

Said discusses the ethical usefulness of musical autonomy in terms of its capacity to clear away constricted notions of identity. In his posthumously published work on late style, Said argues that rigid notions of identity (and by implication the whole arena of identity politics) constitute the deepest penetration of the logic of imperialism into contemporary life: ‘Identity is the process by which the stronger culture, and the more developed society, imposes itself violently upon those who, by the same identity process, are decreed to be lesser people. Imperialism is the export of identity.’

When discussing the orchestra Said claims to have scored a kind of late-style victory over identity. Said comments that ‘One set of identities was superseded by another set. There was an Israeli group, and a Russian group, and a Syrian group, a Lebanese group, a Palestinian group, and a group of Palestinian Israelis. All of them suddenly became cellists and violinists playing the same piece by the same orchestra under the same conductor … The transformation of these kids from one thing to another was basically unstoppable.’

As interaction amongst the players occurs first and foremost in the exceptional sphere of musical autonomy, Said claims they are then able to conduct conversations about the political situation that bring them together without the pressure to hold back in the name of diplomacy. This anti-identitarian agenda is, in this regard, ‘non-political’ in that it seeks a non-representative mode of dialogue. The orchestra, Said comments, ‘is nonpolitical and has no ulterior motive. It doesn’t pretend to be building bridges and all that hokey stuff. But there it is, a paradigm of coherent and intelligent living together.’ The idea that the orchestra is ‘nonpolitical’ is only true in as much as an ‘atonal’ approach to the conflict is designed primarily to develop the cultural sphere. However, given the circumstances of its conception, the orchestra can only exist in relation to the politics of the Middle East. Moreover, the vocabulary Said uses to discuss the orchestra is the same that he uses to advocate for a bi-national Palestinian-Israeli state. Where the one-state solution would enable its mutually alienated citizens to ‘find out about the other,’ music provides the musicians of the orchestra the opportunity of a ‘voyage to the other.’ If music enables one to ‘put one’s own identity to the side,’ then the idea of a bi-national state is ‘musical’ as it is premised on permanently sidelining the idea of a state built on ethnic community.

In this highly idealistic register the critical modes Said established in his earlier work on counterpoint become eclipsed by a pan-idealistc sense of music’s redemptive capacity; music in toto is presented as a

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23 Said, On Late Style 85.
25 Said (Parallels and Paradoxes 8) commented that ‘No one felt under any pressure to hold anything back.’
27 Bayoumi and Rubin, Edward Said Reader 431.
28 Said and Barenboim, Parallels and Paradoxes 11.
29 Said and Barenboim, Parallels and Paradoxes 11.
non-representational and therefore non-coercive alternative to the language of politics. This is particularly evident in the documentary made about the orchestra, *Knowledge is the Beginning*. In between interviews and sequences of orchestral rehearsals and performances there are short passages showing group discussions about politics led by Said. The orchestral members in these segments look either passively benign, uninterested or vaguely irritated as Said lectures on the irreconcilabilities of the situation. In one passage Said talks stridently about the need to think about how to ‘maintain identities’ in a situation in which a rigid politics of identity has disabled the idea of democratic citizenship. Upon finishing this short speech, which implies the necessity for a one-state solution, there is a short silence before Barenboim interjects with, ‘shall we play?’ In the next shot, Said is Barenboim’s page-turner as he and Yo-Yo Ma perform a recital. This is not an isolated moment: throughout the documentary Said comes across as a witness to the project of making great music. In another sequence, one of the players describes his disbelief at Barenboim’s conducting abilities dubbed over a shot of Said gaping, it is implied, at the power of the maestro’s baton.

There is nothing ‘atonal’ or ‘contrapuntal’ about the choice of repertoire for the orchestra. It is drawn from the most conventional Classical and Romantic sources: Mozart, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky concertos and symphonies. Most sequences of orchestral performances in the documentary catch the orchestra as it reaches the moment of organic return in the recapitulation of one or other Romantic symphony. This is music designed to elicit tears of catharsis and get an audience to its feet. In *Parallels and Paradoxes*—a book of conversations between Said and Barenboim—Said tells an anecdote about one player who tells another that only Arabs can play Arabic music. ‘Ten days later,’ Said continues, ‘the same kid who had claimed that only Arabs can play Arabic music was teaching Yo-Yo Ma how to tune his cello to the Arabic scale. So obviously he thought Chinese people could play Arabic music. Gradually the circle extended and they were all playing Beethoven’s Seventh. It was quite an extraordinary event.’ Said makes no pretence of trying to link the contrapuntal or atonal formations of knowledge he spent twenty years thinking about to the actual act of performance. This may seem a moot point, but it brings out some of the underlying contradictions in the rhetoric that accompanied the orchestra’s formation and its relation to the Palestinian/Israeli context.

For example, in the 2006 Reith lectures delivered by Barenboim, it is clear that the conductor holds an altogether different conception of the relationship between ethics and musical form. In the final lecture of the series Barenboim uses the concept of recapitulation as an analogy for Israel’s need to reconcile itself to its context:

> One plays a statement one way at the beginning of a piece, but when the same statement returns later, in what we call in musical terminology the recapitulation, it is in a completely different psychological state of mind. And therefore the bridge, the transition, determines not only itself but what comes after it . . . Therefore in my view the future of the state of Israel must develop and find the golden mean that will lead to harmonious internal and external relations, just as in a piece of music its harmony can be achieved even if it is made up of conflicting elements, albeit of the strongest and most radical nature, as long as each

31 Smaczny, *Knowledge is the Beginning*.
element can develop itself to its fullest. The genuine and original idea of the renewal of Jewish settlement in Palestine has been totally overwhelmed and diverted by forces that believe that power and not what Buber called the command of the spirit, that power rules the social and political destiny of humanity.\textsuperscript{33}

It is not the original concept of Israeli statehood that is problematic for Barenboim, only its oppressive application. The fundamental idea of return and settlement remains at the centre of Barenboim’s attempt to relate musical form to political progress. The concept of development is not the playing out of individual contrapuntal lines, but the transition to an eventual (harmonic) resolution. This is almost the opposite of Said’s perception of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra as an embodiment of an irreconcilable, ‘atonal’ situation in which a just resolution is unobtainable, in which a state of irresolution might eventually transform the underlying psychology of identity that perpetuates the conflict. There can be no recapitulation, only what Said would call the ‘elaboration’ of a new consciousness of self and other. This is why Said finds the structural relationships in sonata form deficient: it requires return and some form of reaffirmation.

In meeting Barenboim half way to form the orchestra, any ‘critical force’ held by particular musical forms is dissolved into the prescribed category of ‘great’ music. The orchestra is an uneasy synthesis of two radically different ideas about how music might serve a critical function in relation to politics. What we are left with is not music performing an aesthetic intervention, but a vague sense of music’s capacity to uplift and bring together. Charges of musical elitism that Said had tried to keep at bay by insisting on its ‘critical force’ here find an easy target. As Peter Tregear has noted, much of the theoretical integrity of Said’s attempt to shape Adorno’s ideas into practice founders when we consider the ease with which the West-Eastern Divan project has been packaged and sold on the stage and in the record and DVD stores of Europe and the United States.\textsuperscript{34} Barenboim’s presence as a highly marketable virtuoso tends to eclipse Said’s desire to channel the critical potential of music as a silent witness to the inhumanity of Middle-Eastern politics. There is a conflict of interest between the genuine need to develop an awareness of the cultural sphere of the situation and the convenient ability to sell the orchestra outside the Middle East as a digestible substitute for the conflict itself. So while the orchestra may or may not provoke a certain awareness of the persistence of Culture amidst the political and social irreconcilabilities between its members, the image the orchestra presents in the wider context is one of reconciliation and appeasement.

To get a sense of how far from Said’s critical ideas the orchestra moves we can look to his comments on the intransigence of music in the final passages of \textit{Humanism and Democratic Criticism}. Citing Adorno’s work on music as an alternative to utopian teleologies, Said writes, ‘any assimilation of individual musical work to its social setting is, says Adorno, false. I conclude with the thought that the intellectual’s provisional home is the domain of an exigent, resistant, intransigent art into which, alas, one can neither retreat nor search for solutions.’\textsuperscript{35} There is a disjunction at the moment Said’s work on music moves into the worldly


\textsuperscript{34} Peter Tregear, ‘Said’s Use of Music as a Practical Critique of Adorno,’ paper presented at the symposium, ‘Edward Said: Debating the Legacy of a Public Intellectual,’ Australian National University, March 2006.

sphere it heralded as its proper domain. Released from his language, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra folds into institutional structures of elite music and liberal philanthropy.

Watching the orchestra perform Beethoven’s ninth symphony under Barenboim in Berlin in August 2006 as part of a tour that began during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon—a performance that was being filmed for another documentary on the orchestra—an alternative approach to assessing the orchestra’s ethical potential occurred to me. That is, an article that would discuss the orchestra’s effectiveness in highlighting the geopolitical and legal obstacles that would prevent such a seemingly harmless project from going ahead. (Mozart’s *Sinfonia Concertante* for violin and viola was withdrawn from the program as one of the soloists could not obtain a visa to travel to Germany.) In a strategic sense there is a role the worldwide industry of elite western music might play in intervening as a kind of humanistic resistance. Seen this way, it is not European elite music’s intransigence that is instrumentalised by the orchestra, but its sociological place as something that has an assumed cultural value, which might in turn trump the segregationist politics of the Middle East. As the cultural value and status of Beethoven’s music is usually seen as beyond reproach, it gives Barenboim and Said leverage in making a case for transnational cooperation that might otherwise be seen as radical and inflammatory. What I have argued is that there is nothing essentially musical about the way in which this critical function of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra operates. To properly assess the ethical potential of the orchestra what would be required is not an aesthetics of music (as Said romantically hoped), but an analysis of its strategic, sociological usefulness.
The Family Symphony Orchestra: Growing Up Making Music

Andrea F. Bohlman & Philip V. Bohlman

The authors write as father-daughter insiders, representing a family whose two violinist children went through the ranks of Chicago-area youth orchestras. They argue that, in American youth orchestras, all family members are crucial to an orchestra’s structure, from fundraising to maintaining tight rehearsal schedules. Auxiliary parent organisations ensure local survival and the necessary contexts for socialisation. The authors’ picture of the larger network of youth orchestras in a large American city and the interaction with sister orchestras throughout the USA and the world provides an interesting comparison with Australasia.

Prologue: Family First

‘Are there any Texans here?’

With the zeal of a local booster buoying his voice, George H.W. Bush greeted the members of the Encore Chamber Orchestra of Chicago after its February 2000 performance at the Chicago Cultural Center. The high-school age members of the Encore Chamber Orchestra, the elite core of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, found themselves at a loss to answer the former President of the United States, who had clearly missed the point of the concert, a civic event to which he had been invited as a special guest. Fundamental to the Encore Chamber Orchestra’s role in Chicago was its symbolic representation of the city and its surrounding suburbs, that is, the high level of music making of the metropolitan Midwest of the United States. Their reputation as the finest musicians from one of the leading youth symphony orchestras in the world was a profoundly local phenomenon, fully in contrast with the cosmopolitan professionalism of the...
Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The paths of these musicians had reached the Encore Chamber Orchestra only after a long journey from families in the Chicago area, and those paths formed a network between the family and the city. Connected in this way, the youth symphony orchestras of Chicago were an extension of the family, or rather, a performative space in which young musicians together embodied the common culture of family and city.

Even in the presence of a former President, the orchestra members were baffled more than bemused. The most fitting recourse they could muster was a muted chorus of embarrassed laughter. Why would anyone imagine there might possibly be Texans in the Encore Chamber Orchestra of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra? How could a former American President so fundamentally misunderstand the concert he had just experienced?

Any one of us in our family might have written this article. As we discussed it and undertook the local ethnography, each one of us quickly joined in the conversations and interviews, expressing strong opinions about experiences cherished or long forgotten. As the article took shape, it became increasingly clear that it would be a collective expression, that is, that each family member would introduce personal themes into the counterpoint of the article. Ultimately, this article is about all of us. It is about the experiences Benjamin Bohlman and Andrea Bohlman had as youth symphony orchestra members from their early teens into their years as university students; it is no less an article about the experiences of Christine Wilkie Bohlman and Philip V. Bohlman, the two parents who were involved in the youth symphony orchestra experience at multiple levels. Our individual and common experiences provide the basis for the article itself.

Because we have willingly succumbed to representing familial experiences through the performativity of the article, we owe you a sense of our individual voices as well. We employ ‘we’ and ‘us’ throughout, and in so doing, we signify common authorship and common experience. Christine Wilkie Bohlman can claim the longest experience with youth symphony orchestras, having played viola in the Wisconsin String Sinfonia as a teenager, and for the past decade teaching in the largest community music school in Chicago, the Merit School of Music, which maintains its own orchestra. Philip Bohlman has never performed in youth symphony orchestras, though he did play the French horn in high school and town bands during his youth. Andrea Bohlman and Benjamin Bohlman played in youth symphony orchestras throughout their teens and continued orchestral playing in their university orchestras and in the orchestras of Greenwood Music Camp, at which both were students and later counsellors. Youth symphony orchestras, in a word, have been inseparable from who we are as a family.

If we begin this article autobiographically, it is by way of making our central theoretical point: the American youth symphony orchestra would not exist without some kind of stable family structure to support it at all levels. The family is initially responsible for financing and maintaining private lessons. It is the family that first explores whether a youth symphony orchestra is right for the children. At the earliest stages of participation, the family makes long-term decisions about whether the sacrifices demanded of young musicians are

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1 Christine Wilkie Bohlman is Lecturer in Piano and Chamber Music at the University of Chicago; Andrea F. Bohlman is an alumna of Stanford University (BA in violin and music history) and the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, and of Royal Holloway, University of London (MMus in musicology), and is a PhD student in historical musicology at Harvard University; Benjamin H. Bohlman is a fourth-year aviation major at Purdue University and a violinist of the Purdue University Cavie String Quartet; Philip V. Bohlman is a pianist, who teaches ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago. Andrea and Benjamin Bohlman both played in the West Suburban Youth Orchestra, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Encore Chamber Orchestra.
worthwhile. Playing in the youth symphony orchestra means not doing certain other things: for most young musicians that means extensive participation in athletic programs. The family, moreover, must organise its weekly activities to get the children to rehearsals on time and pick them up again later. Above all, the family’s contributions are critical to the financial underpinnings of the youth symphony orchestra. Joining the youth symphony orchestra is serious business.

As children mature physically and musically, they move through the various stages of the orchestral experience; each stage places growing demands upon the family, putting new challenges in play. To what extent should an orchestra mirror the family? Might the orchestra even become a surrogate replacement for a family? What decisions should be made when or as the orchestra experience becomes pre-professional? The paradox of such questions is obvious, at least to families who move through the sundry rituals that constitute the youth orchestra experience. Just as the youth symphony orchestra depends on the family, it also leads to and through certain rites of passage that lead the young musician away from the family, and that guide the musicians to adulthood.

**Intermezzo: Beethoven under One’s Belt**

At first glance the program of the 21 February 1998 concert of the West Suburban Youth Orchestra (WSYO) hardly looked like that of an ensemble of ten- to eighteen-year-olds from the outlying communities of Chicago. The WSYO’s two ensembles, the Sinfonia Orchestra (a training orchestra) and the Concert Orchestra (the outstanding musicians from the suburban school districts), divided the program between two major works, the Mozart Symphony no. 25 in G minor and the Beethoven Symphony no. 6 in F major. Punctuating the two symphonies was Beethoven’s Overture ‘Creatures of Prometheus.’ That this was serious repertory was underscored by the final brief work of the evening, Leroy Anderson’s *Blue Tango*, played by the Combined Orchestras.

The seriousness of the repertory was also not lost upon the WSYO musicians, Andrea and Benjamin Bohlman (violinists) among them. Playing Mozart and Beethoven symphonies had acquired increasing symbolic weight for the orchestra. Each year, the WSYO learned a new Beethoven symphony (for example the First Symphony in the previous season), leading parents and children in the Concert Orchestra alike to speak about the potential of ‘getting all the Beethoven symphonies under our belts.’ The Mozart symphonies were the purview of the Sinfonia Orchestra and, like much of the repertory played by that orchestra, this version was an arrangement by Ralph Matesky. Most importantly, Mozart symphonies led eventually to Beethoven symphonies.

Even at the beginning of the youth symphony journey, repertory is of the utmost importance. Beethoven symphonies—and Mozart, Brahms, and Franck symphonies—placed musical demands on the members of the WSYO that were a quantum leap beyond those of their school ensembles. Arguably—and indeed there were hallway discussions to this end—these musicians did not bring the necessary maturity to the performance of Beethoven symphonies. If anyone believed that Chicago youth symphony orchestras played ‘over their heads,’ she or he knew well enough not to voice such an opinion. That, however, was precisely the point to keep in mind when it might seem that judgement should be passed. The WSYO members did not bring maturity, but through performance—through the rite of passage afforded by Beethoven—they acquired maturity. Performance itself was the liminal stage through which they passed toward orchestral communitas. The more orchestral musicians could get Beethoven under their belts, the more effectively they could mobilise their journeys across the orchestral network and landscape that lay before them.
The Cosmopolitan Family and the Orchestral Network

The experience of the American youth symphony orchestra relies on a cosmopolitanism that is inescapable for the family. Playing in the orchestra is, first and foremost, never isolated, which is to say no young musician relies solely on the orchestra for her or his musical experiences. At the earliest stages, musicians also play in their school orchestras, in fact, may be required also to be members of a school orchestra. At more advanced stages, during American junior high or middle school (that is, pre-teen and teen), young musicians participate in two or three orchestral ensembles. At the most advanced, pre-university stages, young musicians focus time and energy on the primary youth symphony orchestra, but increasingly play in chamber-music ensembles that spin off from that orchestra.

The cosmopolitanism of the youth orchestra experience produces and depends on a complex network that has both social and musical dimensions. Socially, the orchestral network extends into the urban and suburban communities of a metropolitan or regional area. Because of the network, young musicians at the greatest extreme from the metropolitan or regional centre will theoretically always have access to the entry-level stages of the orchestra. ‘Extreme,’ in this case, refers to the inner-city housing project in a city such as Chicago, or the rural small town in an agricultural American state such as Wisconsin. The structure of the youth symphony orchestra is therefore centralised, but the centre is no less defined by a series of orbits that stretch to the geographical and social borders served by an orchestra.

Musical cosmopolitanism has as many forms as there are types of youth orchestra. The orchestra that reaches into the inner city and into the suburb mixes repertories, ideally to respond to orchestra members and audiences alike. The orchestra that seeks to provide its members with the breadth and depth of the canonic repertory forges a different kind of cosmopolitanism, usually more international than local.

Orchestral networks mobilise musicians, allowing and encouraging them to explore a complex orbit of youth symphony orchestras. We have already discussed the ways in which young musicians play in other local ensembles, say, those of an urban music school, such as the Merit School of Music in Chicago, or the Longey School in Boston. The networks also extend outward, particularly to summer music camps, or even to special festival orchestras for young musicians. The connections between an orchestra and a summer music camp—Aspen, Greenwood, Tanglewood, et cetera—may well begin with the orchestra and its network of alumni or affiliated music schools, but then it is sustained by financial support dedicated to the network. In North America, summer music camps are critical to the musical development of young musicians and, within these experiences the orchestra is critical to the socialisation of the musicians, especially in the highly competitive atmosphere that pervades the camps themselves. Surrounded by that atmosphere, the symphony is a place of familiarity, a safe haven in the orchestral network, where competition is minimised and cooperation is maximised.

2 Concert programs always list the name of each young musician’s school with her or his name. Private teachers, individually and collectively, are often thanked on one page of the program.

3 During these years, Andrea and Benjamin Bohlman played in the West Suburban Youth Orchestra, in the orchestra of their school, the University of Chicago Laboratory School, and in various ensembles of the Merit School of Music.

4 The Merit School of Music in Chicago, for example, earmarks particular summer scholarships for Greenwood and Aspen.
A Sense of Place
The cosmopolitanism and networks that characterise the American youth symphony would not be possible without the strong sense of place that at once anchors the orchestra and imbues it with a spirit of mobility. Each orchestra plays a dual role, which is to say, it must respond to the local base of the orchestra and the world beyond to which each orchestra aspires. It is at the local base of support that the family is indispensable, for it is at the local level that orchestral activities are domesticated and made to resemble the community the orchestra attempts to represent.

The local level, however, assumes different geographical forms. For urban orchestras, level one is regional, usually determined by the distances parents must bring their children for rehearsals and other orchestral events. In Chicago, the regional level is directionally determined, by the large suburban regions, such as the West Suburban Youth Orchestra (founded in 1955) in which Andrea and Benjamin Bohlman played. At the other end of the local continuum lies the metropolitan orchestra, for example the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO, founded in 1946), which rehearses in the heart of the city and maintains a loose affiliation with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, in whose home, Symphony Center, the CYSO gives its most public concerts.

The orchestral network of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra itself engenders mobility by fostering four orchestras, each marking a stage of achievement. Grounding the network is an ensemble known as the Chicago Youth Prep Strings. Less an orchestra than a program for supplementing string instruction in the Chicago schools, the CYPS nonetheless introduces children at a young age to the social and musical pleasures of making music together.\(^5\) The next stage in the CYSO network is the Chicago Youth Debut Orchestra, which continues to maintain string instruction while intensifying the level of ensemble playing. The Chicago Youth Concert Orchestra directly serves as a feeder orchestra for the CYSO. With a mixture of middle-school children and high-school children playing instruments for which there are limited openings (for example, flute), the CYCO rehearse independently, but joins at least once each year to share the stage of Symphony Center with the CYSO.

For many young musicians, mobility within the orchestral network parallels socio-economic mobility. Just as local musical organisations occupy the musical periphery and youth symphony orchestras occupy the centre, so too does their continuum reflect the urban and suburban landscape. At the entry level, young musicians in Chicago are active primarily in their own neighbourhoods, all of which have ethnic and economic dimensions. Even in the twenty-first century, ethnic and economic diversity in Chicago is extreme. Neighbourhoods—the unofficially official name for Chicago’s geographical divisions—are always culturally distinct, even as they undergo historical change.\(^6\) More and more activities take place outside the community, thus requiring that

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\(^5\) Brass and woodwind programs dominate American music education in the public schools, so much so that outside the city (for example in rural Wisconsin, where Philip Bohlman grew up), string programs are virtually unknown, whereas in the city they play a secondary role to wind music. Within American public-school education, wind ensembles and bands play many roles that are ancillary to music education itself, such as marching bands or pep bands for sporting events, which accordingly generate much more financial support from community and school budgets. The supplementary educational functions of the Chicago Youth Prep Strings, therefore, are decisive for the success of the youth symphony orchestra.

\(^6\) The Near West Side community of Pilsen, for example, was historically Czech, but has been a centre for the Hispanic community for the past two decades, all the while keeping its community name as a memorial to a past identity. The official political designation of areas within Chicago is ‘ward.’
students leave their neighbourhoods and the family structures that define them. In urban sociological terms, the mobility of the orchestral network requires that the young musician leave the neighbourhood to enter the mainstream.

**Intermezzo: The Youth Symphony Orchestra as American Experience**

This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before.\(^7\)

With so much variety and such concern for diversity undergirding the many forms of youth symphony orchestras in the United States, it might seem contradictory to turn to a single unifying thread in this intermezzo: the orchestras we discuss in this article share a common concern for expressing themselves as American. Whether the American experience is singular or plural, of course, is a matter of historical debate. For the youth symphony orchestra and for the families that anchor it in the neighbourhoods of an orchestral network, nonetheless, the American experience may often be regarded as unique because of its record of accommodating difference. Like the American experience, then, the youth symphony orchestra ideally provides a place for everyone.

Historically, the American experience has never come easily to American orchestras. The same stories accompany virtually every turnover in orchestral personnel: foreign-born, if not foreign-trained, musicians are preferred; American-born conductors have almost no chance of receiving the top posts; serious consideration rarely goes to musical directors who would encourage innovative programming of works by contemporary American composers. It does not behoove aspiring musicians or conductors to stress American connections or inclinations.

The narratives for the youth symphony orchestra are different. The American youth symphony orchestra embodies the city and its diverse population, and it serves thus as a simulacrum for place and nation. The capacity of the orchestra to train disadvantaged children, at least ideally, brings city, region, state, and nation together, and it does so in ways that are cooperative rather than competitive.\(^8\) The programming of American music, whether it be traditionally national and nationalist repertory or new works by young American composers, is central to the mission of most youth symphony orchestras.

The youth symphony orchestra experience marks the everyday and the moment of national crisis. It stretches across the network of orchestral ensembles, and it provides a thread that holds them together. It is hardly surprising that the youth symphony orchestra steps in at time of national crisis, for example, in the commemoration ceremony on 30 September 2001, with which the City of Chicago officially honoured those killed in the events of 9/11. Joined together with other orchestras and choruses, some with youthful members, others with adults, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra exerted a foundational presence in the massing of civic voices to express a common American response.

The American repertory on the program was, in many ways, predictable: the Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*, the closing movement of Dvořák’s *New World Symphony*, the Barber Adagio for Strings. There was also a fair share of orchestral music without direct association to the United States or the events of 9/11: the Allegretto movement of the Beethoven Symphony no. 7 or the ‘Nimrod’ variation from Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*.

\(^7\) An unverifiable attribution to Leonard Bernstein, used as the motto for the concert, ‘Chicago Honors America’s Heroes’ (30 September 2001).

\(^8\) Throughout this article we have resisted comparison of youth symphony orchestras to athletics in the United States, the latter a competitive undertaking for local school districts and towns, which invest heavily in the support of team competition. That type of local competition or lack thereof is a major difference between athletic and orchestral programs.
The juxtaposition of American and youth-symphony repertories occurred almost seamlessly. The mix of a Beethoven symphony with the Barber Adagio succeeded in making the funeral march of the first an elegy for American dead, and the cloying string sound of the latter became Beethovenian in its neo-romanticism. The spirituals performed by the Chicago Children’s Choir, with and without CYSO accompaniment, evoked the suffering of racially oppressed African Americans at a time of national remembrance and mourning. The many parts fitted a whole, and they did so because they had done so before. The monumental length of the concert in Chicago’s major open-air performance venue notwithstanding, the suturing of fragments into a national wholeness took place in ways familiar to all.9

Not lost upon those attending the concert was youth itself. At a time of national loss, the next generation was performing. These were musicians capable of transforming their music, drawn from all the neighbourhoods of Chicago, to give voice to national mourning.

**The Fork in the Road: The Two Types of American Youth Symphony Orchestra**

Which youth symphony orchestra is right for my kids?

Each rite of passage confronted by aspiring young orchestral musicians presents them and their parents with this seemingly simple but ultimately very complex question. There are so many choices, some obvious, others unreachable, all desirable in their own ways. When the parent surveys the landscape of available orchestras, those options that at first seem straightforward quickly intersect with others. Charting the orchestral path for one’s children inevitably means looking far down the road to determine—to speculate about—the roles symphonic music will play in their future lives.

Of the many types of youth orchestra available to American children, most fall into two larger categories: the ‘Amateur Youth Symphony Orchestra’ and the ‘Pre-Professional Youth Symphony Orchestra.’10 The distinctions ‘amateur’ and ‘pre-professional’ clearly refer to the goals that a family sets for its children, goals which, in the first order, seem to lie in the remote future, but in actuality confront the young musician from the very outset. In the course of their careers, young musicians are seldom spared the tensions resulting from the need to choose which road they must travel along in their journeys toward and beyond the landscape of youth symphony orchestras.

**The Amateur Youth Symphony Orchestra (AYSO)**

In its most common forms, the AYSO allows a local community to reimagine itself, even to produce and reproduce itself as an ideal type. Fundamental to the philosophy of the AYSO is service to the community, above all, the opening of opportunities for its children. ‘Opportunity,’ in this sense, is a matter of social and civic involvement. The AYSO opens its doors to all the children of a given area, regardless of their socio-economic or religious backgrounds, or their ethnic or racial community. The profile of the AYSO is thus one of deliberate diversity, which inevitably means that the orchestra itself—usually its administration of community musicians and parents—takes steps to encourage diversity.

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9 The 30 September 2001 concert was performed in the Petrillo Music Shell in Chicago’s Grant Park, which has since 2004 been supplanted by the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, designed by Frank Gehry.

10 While based on our experiences in the Chicago area, the two categories adequately explain the types of youth symphony orchestra found in many other North American urban areas.
The musical and social outreach of the AYSO reflects its underlying concern for opportunity and diversity. Rehearsals take place in public facilities, usually local high schools. Seasonal concerts and the run-up events that precede them also use public facilities, though steps are taken to ensure that concerts move from one school to another. Commonly, a concert will take place in the auditorium of a school attended by a student in the AYSO. The AYSO also encourages more active involvement in local educational programs, whose goal it is to ‘return’ music education and involvement to the local community. It is not uncommon, for example, for an AYSO to require—even to request written documentation—that its members continue to play in their school ensembles.  

On the surface, it might appear as if the AYSO is preoccupied with social rather than musical considerations. The success of the AYSO, however, ultimately lies in its ability to bring together the social and the musical, ideally transforming them so that they are one and the same. Repertory serves this end, becoming more diverse as the result of deliberate choices to profile the young musicians. An AYSO seeks various ways of weaving vernacular traditions into its repertories. Jazz, for example, finds its way to concert programs. AYSO educational programs, too, foster jazz by allowing for the formation of small-band ensembles, which perhaps once per year perform—that is, are ‘showcased’—in an AYSO concert.  

Diversity assumes a different form in the freer mix of new music, both classical works of the twentieth century and recent, or commissioned, compositions by living composers, especially those who are young and have local connections. The AYSO musician, therefore, has the opportunity to interact with living traditions, which extend far beyond the canonic Classical and Romantic symphonies demanded of young musicians with an eye toward professional careers. The AYSO repertory must be welcoming, expansive, and inclusive, and the more it achieves these goals, the more it succeeds in reimagining the community of which it is a part.

**THE PRE-PROFESSIONAL YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (PPYSO)**  
For parents and youthful musicians in search of a career-long commitment to Western art music, the PPYSO is a necessary first step on a long journey. Taking that first step and then making sure that it leads directly toward future steps and stages in a musical career determines the character of a PPYSO already when a family decides whether to commit itself to the journey. If the PPYSO were essentially a training ground, with a feeder role to other orchestras and ensembles, there would appear to be little room for social or cultural considerations. Above all, musical talent and financial backing determine who can take the first step provided by the PPYSO and who cannot.  

This is not to say that ‘opportunity’ and ‘diversity’ play no role for PPYSO families, rather that they have different meanings and functions. The PPYSO is not so much an opportunity itself, as it is an institution that creates opportunities for the future. The youthful musician from an ethnically diverse or economically disadvantaged background should be able to enter into opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable in her or his own community. Diversity is an ideal result of pre-professional orchestral training, not a goal.  

To proceed unencumbered along the journey of the PPYSO, youthful musicians learn repertory, the dimensions of which are determined by tradition and historical canon. First and foremost, of course, is the...
orchestral repertory itself, overwhelmingly symbolised by the multi-movement symphonies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Second, but related to the symphonic canon, is the concerto canon, the major works that allow PYSO musicians to perform as soloists and to add a notch to their pre-professional belt. Third, PYSOs support chamber symphonies and chamber music, often realising these in overtly hierarchical forms. The chamber symphony (for example, the Encore Chamber Orchestra in which George H.W. Bush sought Texans) comprises the very best musicians in the PYSO. Distinguishing chamber-music ensembles are prefixes such as ‘honors’—the ‘honors string quartet.’ Finally, the PYSO does not avoid contemporary music, but it turns to it primarily to bolster the canon. Typical twentieth-century symphonic works in the PYSO repertory come from the Russian traditions of Stravinsky and Shostakovich. In contrast, it would be very surprising indeed to hear a symphonic work by Skryabin or Schnittke. There is a practical explanation for the relative absence of new music, namely that it often employs an orchestration to which the PYSO ensemble configurations do not easily respond (for example, extended percussion sections).

PYSO programming, however, does not ignore the professional advantages offered by playing new works by established composers. With solid financial resources at its disposal, the PYSO regularly commissions new works. In 2002, for example, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra commissioned a tone poem by Augusta Reed Thomas, then the composer-in-residence of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The commission not only solidified the CYSO’s connections to the CSO, it provided even more distinction to the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra when it premiered the Thomas commission at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Inclusivity and exclusivity produce a strange tension in the repertory of the PYSO. The demand to include as much of the orchestral canon as possible means that everything else is largely excluded. PYSOs largely do not play jazz, and jazz ensembles would be inappropriate among the chamber ensembles. Untraditional ensembles of all kinds rarely make an appearance in PYSO educational programs. If jazz fails to find a chink in the canonic armour, popular music and world music fall fully outside the realm of pre-professional training. Education programs, in fact, are charged with professional preparation, making sure the youthful musician understands the canon inside and out. Anything else would mean that the PYSO was falling short of the expectations of parents and musicians alike.

**Home Away from Home: The Summer Youth Symphony Orchestra**

The young musician experiences transitions through the hierarchy of youth orchestras as proof of his or her musical advancement. As a result, musicians at the front of their sections in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra pride themselves on being the best in the city. The competitive high schooler’s response, however, is to continue to search for pre-professional ladders to climb. At summer music camps and festivals, the best encounter the best; youth symphony families are brought together in summer orchestras. Competition to become and remain the best begins again.

For most CYSO musicians, the most prestigious summer music camp offerings are outside their home region. The journey from the Midwest takes them to the orchestras of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in western Massachusetts, supported by the Boston Symphony, and the Aspen Music School. Large

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12 In the five years during which Andrea Bohlman and Benjamin Bohlman were members of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, there was one performance of a Schnittke overture.
groups from the CYSO attend these larger festivals. There is no refuting that these festivals, where youth
orchestras conducted by James Levine accompany Joshua Bell, represent an international stage for the young
musician. The CYSO delegation is intermixed with national and international youth orchestra musicians.
Smaller camps, too, create new youth orchestras from their national mix. On a more regional scale, the
uneven national representation creates an insider-outsider dynamic at the beginning, particularly for young
musicians venturing farther away from home.

Greenwood Music Camp, the musical home-away-from-home for Andrea and Benjamin Bohlman, is an
example of such a regional camp, where the student body is largely made up of students from Boston and
New York. With a focus on chamber music and the chamber orchestra experience, Greenwood emphasises
small-scale musical communities and dismisses aspirations for international presence as a camp. The atmos-
phere is less competitive than the preparatory environments of the PPYSOs in which most of the students
have played, but encountering youth musicians from elsewhere in the US inspires regional loyalty in the
campers. At Greenwood, the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra (YPO) of Boston’s New England Conservatory
(NEC) dominates as a youth orchestra presence. Safe on their home turf, its members proselytise the
orchestra’s elite status of national superiority, engaging students from Illinois and California in an imaginary
battle of the bands.

The diplomatic significance of the YPO’s biennial tours excuses the late arrival of at least fifteen of the
camp’s sixty students every other summer. Maestro Benjamin Zander’s ambitions take the orchestra to Cuba,
Mexico, Brazil and Venezuela, where he hopes to play music ‘never before heard’ in the major cities. For
most Greenwooders, the camp is the summer’s highlight in its own right. However, when families drive their
friends from Boston to rural Cummington on the Sunday night of the second day of camp—after a fifteen-hour
flight and eight-hour bus ride—it is hard not to imagine that the YPOers’ epic cosmopolitan adventures are
the pinnacle of youth musicianship.

The YPO is the tip of the iceberg at NEC’s Preparatory School, a Saturday program that nurtures young
musicians from their first lesson to their senior recital before attending the Juilliard School in New York City.
Entire families are enrolled simultaneously—a number of the school’s nineteen ensembles aim for cross-
generational participation. Mothers and fathers make the drive from New Jersey, New Hampshire and Newton,
Massachusetts to meet in the cafés surrounding the school as their children take music theory, play chamber
music, take lessons and rehearse with their orchestras. Family-run for over seventy-five years, Greenwood serves
as a logical summer home for these musical troupes. Many of the prep-school faculty coach at Greenwood and
the same parents drive three hours each way every Saturday for a four-hour chamber music concert. Students
in the YPO’s younger sibling, the Youth Symphony, play second violin in quartets with YPO stars.

Greenwood is an extension of community for students at NEC, but to attend Greenwood from Houston,
Chicago, or Berkeley is to leave the comforts of home. The youthful musician is told her orchestra is unheard
of and her position as principal dismissed, and no one knows that once she sits down in a string quartet, she
can play anything placed on the stand before her. Initially, this is frustrating and heart-breaking. The years
committed to accomplishing goals in Chicago seem wasted. No one of the musical family is there and even
worse, it seems, everyone else has families of their own. NEC prep, with its concrete affiliation to a major
music school, is more amazing than anything imaginable in the city of Chicago.
Outsiders—students from any region beyond New York City—commiserate together, sharing stories of home as the New England Conservatory and Juilliard prep students also do. Soon the CYSO musicians feel a part of some new kind of cosmopolitan orchestral network, though not yet the YPO. The San Francisco Youth Symphony and Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra are paired as sister organisations, both representing their cities and touring internationally in Europe. The San Francisco Youth Symphony benefits more substantially from the San Francisco Symphony, which subsidises the ensemble entirely, but already the distinctions between organisations are beginning to become remnants, not realisable in the new symphonic world of the summer, in which there are neither advantages nor disadvantages.

After five weeks of Greenwood, even those in the YPO reflect on the camp as the best of the summer. Students retain loyalty to their home symphony, excitedly proclaiming that their orchestra is learning Mahler’s Symphony no. 5. Another youth orchestra, however, has formed and dissolved: the Greenwood Youth Symphony, a summer orchestra that allows students to return home and continue to aspire beyond the Chicago Youth Symphony. The summer takes students away from home but returns them, having passed through a crucial rite of passage, to the routine of weekend orchestra rehearsals and their musical family.

**INTERMEZZO: GOING GLOBAL**

Huddled on the edge of the University of Auckland’s Waipapa Marae, a grassy field adjacent to a Maori meetinghouse, the 90 student-musicians of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra watched silently as a Maori woman with a tattooed chin approached. Reaching the group, she stopped and stared at my husband, conductor Jindong Cai, then sang out the news that strangers had arrived. A woman’s voice responded from within the carved meetinghouse, and in a moment three men emerged. Covered in body paint, dressed in decorative loincloths and carrying spears, they slowly advanced toward us—growling, lunging, grunting and thrusting out their tongues in a fearsome ritual.13

The international tour is critical for establishing and disseminating the reputations of American youth symphony orchestras. In preparation for the international tour, orchestras must plan years in advance to muster sufficient musical and financial resources. For the latter, of course, much of the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the parents. They organise fund drives and devote their time to making them successful. In the months before the tour when, inevitably, fund drives fall short, it is the families that must make up for uncovered costs.14 The financial difficulties it incurs notwithstanding, the international tour has become a standard focus in youth orchestra planning. It too is a ritual—with numerous rites of passage—that major orchestras would be loathe to abandon.

The international tour enhances and extends the mobility of the orchestral network. As obvious as this point may be, it is perhaps less evident just how the network extends once it crosses beyond the borders of the metropolitan area that sponsors it. On one hand, the international tour is about metropolitan image making. At home, families and communities are proud that the city’s musicians are performing under its banner around the world. As a result of the tour, moreover, financial and musical bonds between cities will be strengthened. The musical conduits for those bonds could not be clearer: a youth orchestra on tour joins with other youth orchestras, realising international

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14 It is increasingly common for youth orchestra administration to recognise the inevitable shortfall from the outset, applying a very substantial surcharge to cover tour costs as a condition for acceptance into the orchestra.
cooperation. On the other hand, the international tour is about patriotism and national symbols. The orchestra on tour may represent city and national governments—it is almost impossible to find reviews without some variant of the term, ‘musical ambassadors.’ Similarly, it is almost impossible to find any program on tour that does not contain a fairly healthy component of works marked explicitly as American: Copland, Gershwin, encores of Sousa and American film music.

Missionary zeal pervades and not infrequently motivates the international tour. In the minds of tour organisers, especially those in ancillary roles, such as parent fundraisers, the tour provides a means of spreading classical music to those who have yet fully to benefit from it. In the epigraph beginning this discussion of the international tour, missionary zeal, arrogated to the discourse of colonial encounter, is surely quite shocking, not least because of the complete innocence and absence of reflection by an author (and wife of the conductor) writing in the alumni magazine for an elite American university. The stereotyping and exoticism of this passage, which opens the article below another epigrammatic representation, a photo with the byline, ‘Wizards in Oz: Conductor Cai led 200 musicians from Stanford and the Melbourne Youth Orchestra at Dallas Brooks Center in Melbourne,’ could not be more blatant, but the article continues as if it were again reenacting conversion by performing for the Maori.

We were then invited to cross the marae, remove our shoes and enter the meetinghouse as respectfully as we would a church. Once we were seated—women in back and men in front—a chorus of young Maori performers sang for us as they pantomimed legends that seemed to speak of the sea and the gods. The Stanford students responded to the rousing performance with heartfelt applause, and a movement from Dvořák’s American Quartet.

If we follow briefly the 2005 international tour of the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, it is not only to observe with disbelief the fervour with which it believed it was spreading Western civilisation. What is remarkable, rather, about this international tour is that it illustrates virtually every point we make in this article and that our colleagues in this volume raise in their articles. The international tour brings youth symphony orchestras together, each performance mustering larger and louder combined ensembles—’200 musicians strong’ in Melbourne, ’the SSO and a 349-person choir in the iconic Sydney Opera House,’ performing ’before a standing-room-only audience of 2,300.’ The gatherings of youth symphony orchestras, moreover, leveled cultural differences and then proceeded to bring enlightenment to the uninitiated, among them the Maori students who ’showed up, cheering loudly and revealing that for most it was their first time at an orchestra concert.’ In conclusion, the chronicle of the tour of Australia and New Zealand took a family turn, with the conductor’s wife confessing that ‘the truth is that I loved exploring strange cities alone with my kids and watching the cultural exchange and music making.’

15 During the 1998/1999 European Tour of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, for example, the CYSO’s Bulgarian-born conductor, Rossen Milanov, organised rehearsals and concerts with orchestras in Sofia, Budapest, Bratislava, Brno and Prague, and in Prague the orchestra’s concert was woven into the Prague Academy of Music Festival, to commemorate ‘the sister cities relationship and the 650th Anniversary of Charles University.’

16 As a Stanford University student, admittedly, Andrea Bohlman played as concertmistress of the same orchestra and coordinated fundraising for its 2002 international tour to France and the United Kingdom.

17 Melvin, ‘High Notes Down Under.’

18 Melvin, ‘High Notes Down Under.’

19 Melvin, ‘High Notes Down Under.’

20 Melvin, ‘High Notes Down Under.’
If this is the rhetoric of the international tour, it is surely inseparable from the discourse of the youth symphony orchestra worldwide. It is the discourse of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra that Ben Etherington examines in the previous article. It is the discourse of outreach programs that take the youth symphony orchestra into the impoverished housing projects and racially segregated neighbourhoods of Chicago. It is the discourse that convinces parents that their support of the orchestras in which their children play will accomplish good in the world.

**Coda: After the American Youth Symphony Orchestra**

The culture of the American orchestra is anything but healthy, and the prognosis for its survival is rosy by no-one’s estimation. Regional orchestras are folding or trimming size and concerts radically. Attendance at concerts by even the major orchestras has fallen. Young orchestral musicians can only turn to the future with uncertainty.

Be that as it may, there has been scant evidence that the American orchestra is in decline thus far in the present article. From the neighbourhood training programs to the elite pre-professional orchestras in the centre of the city, youth symphony orchestras are in good shape, and many are thriving. Young musicians continue to want to join the orchestra, and families will spare almost no effort to ensure that their children have access to orchestras at every level. As support groups, families also ensure that there is sufficient financial support, through scholarships and the like, for young musicians from financially disadvantaged families. As we write in summer 2006, planning for the international tours of 2007, 2008 and beyond is well underway.

Why, therefore, do we find such a disjuncture between the youth symphony orchestra and what comes thereafter? Why do parents and young musicians alike commit themselves so passionately to strengthening the culture of classical orchestral music for the young? Is it because the youth symphony orchestra intensifies the life of the family, whereas the largely corporate-funded culture of major symphony orchestras signifies civic pride and the power of art to channel public fund-raising? In this article, impressionistic and personal as it is, we can only speculate about the answers to such questions. We return to the point at which all youth orchestras in the Chicago area begin, with the family. For the family, the orchestral network provides opportunities to socialise through music making, for drawing closer to others with the potential of transforming music into common culture. Ethnic and religious borders are crossed, and diversity is celebrated as cultural treasure. Each member in the family may participate in the orchestral experience in different ways, but these enrich rather than diminish the experience. As the family matures, so too does its music making and common culture, making room for the generation that follows.
This article explores the idea of the youth orchestra as an organisational concept rather than a single type of ensemble. Taking as its study context Victoria’s state-supported youth music organisation, now known as Melbourne Youth Music (MYM), the focus is the development of that organisation’s symphonic bands ensemble structure. It profiles the origins of the symphonic band program as an educational initiative within the State public school system, its development through affiliations with Yamaha Music Australia and the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association (ABODA), and the role of key individuals in this development, such as MYM’s Executive Director Bruce Worland and Russell Hammond, Education Services Manager of Yamaha Music Australia between 1982 and 1990. In particular the article examines the impact on the symphonic band program of visiting overseas conductors at MYM’s annual January music camp between 1985 and 2003.
1985 and 2003. During this time, MYM was involved in a Strategic Partnership Program offered by the Victorian Education Department.

**Background**

Melbourne Youth Music was first established in 1967 as the Secondary Schools Concert Committee. Funded by the State’s Education Department, its charter was to provide Melbourne music students with opportunities for public ensemble performance. Although all youth music organisations have an explicit educational mission, the partnership with the Education Department is a major point of difference between Melbourne Youth Music and other youth orchestra associations around Australia, for the latter’s funding comes from the Australia Council, the Commonwealth and respective State government arts funds. According to Marc Warry, in 2003 MYM received only 2.3 percent of its overall income from the Australia Council, a smaller percentage than the other youth music associations. MYM receives no funding from Arts Victoria.

Until the end of 2003, the Victorian Education Department employed all MYM staff, including administrative and artistic personnel, enabling tutorial staff to be employed for MYM’s regular Saturday program. From 2004, the Education Department’s relationship with MYM changed from that of employer to grant provider, which meant that MYM became the direct employer of both administrative and artistic staff. This funding arrangement, however, represented an overall reduction in money provided by the Education Department and, due to the high cost of employing staff there were reductions in the MYM tutorial program in 2005. To compensate, income needed to be increased and this was sought through student and participant fees.

MYM was originally conceived as an extension of music educational initiatives within the Education Department but now draws students from a wider range of Victorian schools, while remaining faithful to its mission of supplementing performance opportunities available within the school system. In common with many similar organisations operating worldwide at the State, regional or municipal level, MYM provides:

- a performance venue for students who may not have an [ensemble] program in their respective schools,
- an additional [ensemble] experience outside of the school setting,
- and

This makes it a vital resource for music education in Victoria.

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1 These dates do not represent the total period of visiting overseas conductors’ involvement at the January music camp, as the policy employing international conductors continues to this day. The first visiting overseas conductor (Tim Topolewski) visited in 1985–2003 was a year after the ending of the brief United Airlines sponsorship of MYM’s visiting overseas conductor program.

2 During the years of this study, the government department responsible for education in Victoria has had a number of different names, including ‘Education Department,’ ‘Department of School Education,’ and ‘Department of Education and Training.’ In November 2006, the department became the ‘Department of Education.’ To avoid confusion, the term ‘Education Department’ will be used throughout this paper.

3 The Secondary Schools Concert Committee became Melbourne Youth Music Council in 1975. This organisation became Melbourne Youth Music in 1994. Throughout this paper, the organisation will be referred to as ‘Melbourne Youth Music Council’ (or MYMC) when discussing the years 1975–94. At other times, the organisation will be referred to as ‘Melbourne Youth Music’ (or MYM).


5 MYM currently employs one full-time administrator, three part-time administrative staff, twelve ensemble managers, twelve conductors, and fifty-seven tutors. MYM, ‘Moving Forward,’ unpublished, internal MYM discussion paper, May 2007, 12.

6 The amount spent on staffing in 2003 was AU$571,542. This amount fell to AU$382,559 in 2006. MYM, ‘Moving Forward’ 11.

an opportunity to perform at a more accelerated level than may be possible in the school environment and a more intense course of study for those students interested in a career in the music profession.  

Since they address educational as well as performance issues, youth orchestra organisations (referred to hereafter as youth music organisations) characteristically offer a variety of ensemble settings in addition to the classic symphonic ‘youth orchestra’: string orchestras, chamber orchestras, and other ensembles such as wind ensembles, symphonic or stage bands, and various smaller ensembles. As Linda Pickney observes in her study of youth orchestras’ repertoire selection and criteria, ‘these “other” ensembles draw their membership either from the primary orchestral ensemble or from personnel outside that primary orchestral ensemble.’

Typically, but depending on their resources, youth music organisations that have more than one ensemble offer a graded system with the idea of students progressing through junior level and/or beginner groups that serve as training ensembles. Most organisations set prerequisites for admission to each ensemble: in most Australian state-supported youth music organisations, the benchmark reference is generally provided by the graded examination system offered by the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB). Students are grouped by ability rather than age, though most training ensembles have age eligibility criteria. Auditions may be held. Figure 1 provides an overview of the orchestra and symphonic band structures of Australia’s State-government supported youth music organisations in 2006, showing the age range, performance standard and number of participants.

Figure 1. Orchestra and symphonic band structure overview of each youth music organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organisation</th>
<th>Ensembles</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Standard/AMEB Grade</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO)</td>
<td>Queensland Youth Symphony (QYS)</td>
<td>15–23</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO2)</td>
<td>14–23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Queensland Youth Orchestra (QYO3)</td>
<td>12–20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior String Ensemble (JSE)</td>
<td>9–15</td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Symphony (WS)</td>
<td>15–23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wind Ensemble (WE)</td>
<td>13–18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Youth Orchestra Association (SYOA)</td>
<td>Sydney Youth Orchestra (SYO)</td>
<td>16–25</td>
<td>8+</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney Youth Philharmonic</td>
<td>14–20</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Seymour Orchestra</td>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>4–6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sinfonietta</td>
<td>10–13</td>
<td>Not Listed</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chamber Strings</td>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>Not Listed</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speer Orchestra</td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Not Listed</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symphonic Wind Orchestra</td>
<td>14–20</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>40</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Music Association</th>
<th>Orchestra/Symphony/Orchestra</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Size</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Canberra Youth Orchestra (CYO)</td>
<td>14–25</td>
<td>7+</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James McCusker Orchestra (JMO)</td>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYM Wind Symphony</td>
<td>13–26</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYM Concert Band</td>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peg Mantle Strings</td>
<td>11–14</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CYM Sinfonietta</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CYM Junior Strings</td>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>Suzuki 1–3</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Melbourne Youth Music (MYM)</strong></td>
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<td>15–23</td>
<td>8+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Percy Grainger Youth Orchestra (PGYO)</td>
<td>12–20</td>
<td>6+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Margaret Sutherland Strings (MSS)</td>
<td>11–16</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Henri Touzeau Strings (HTS)</td>
<td>7–11</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne Youth Symphonic Band (MYSB)</td>
<td>15–23</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Antill Youth Band (JAYB)</td>
<td>12–18</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Dreyfus Youth Band (GDYB)</td>
<td>9–14</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tasmanian Youth Orchestra (TYO)</strong></td>
<td>Tasmanian Youth Orchestra (TYO)</td>
<td>12–24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adelaide Youth Orchestra (AdYO)</strong></td>
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<td>14–25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adelaide Youth Sinfonia (AdSi)</td>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide Youth Strings (AYS)</td>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td><strong>Western Australian Youth Music Association (WAYMA)</strong></td>
<td>Senior WAYO Orchestra</td>
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<td>7+</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WAYO Philharmonic Orchestra</td>
<td>12–19</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collegium String Orchestra</td>
<td>10–16</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sinfonietta String Orchestra</td>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WA Youth Symphonic Band (WAYSB)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Darwin Youth Orchestra</strong></td>
<td>Darwin Youth Orchestra</td>
<td>12–18</td>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Sources for table data are the websites for each Youth Music Association and the report by Warry, *Youth Orchestras Australia*. All data is correct as of 2006.

**Background to MYM’s Symphonic Band Program**

At the same time as the Secondary Schools Concert Committee was established, free instrumental music tuition was introduced into several Victorian government schools on an experimental basis. Group lessons were favoured over one-to-one instruction, meaning that larger numbers of students were able to have access to instrumental lessons. According to Victorian music educator Stephen Carpenter:

Commercial promotion of instrumental programs for inclusion in the school curriculum stimulated a shift from an English to an American tradition. American publishers could provide band methods that were tried and accepted in the USA but broke new ground in...
Mathers: Impact of Visiting Conductors

Until this time, band music in Victoria had been dominated by the English brass band tradition. This tradition, however, had more of a community focus than a school-based focus. The American concert band tradition promoted symphonic bands as both a school-based activity, and an educational forum, in which large numbers of students could participate in ensemble music-making even at the beginner level, and through the use of specially designed materials, could be instructed to play music in these ensembles.

In response to the increasing number of young woodwind, brass and percussion players in the Melbourne school system, the Concert Committee established the Melbourne Youth Symphonic Band (MYSB) in 1974. This was followed in 1976 by a second band, the John Antill Youth Band (JAYB). A third band, the George Dreyfus Youth Band (GDYB), was established in 1987. It was MYMC Chairman Bruce Worland’s intention that each band would serve as a role model for every level of school band activity. Therefore, MYSB was intended to demonstrate best practice in teaching and performance at the advanced band level, while JAYB served the intermediate band level, and GDYB the second-year band level.

Core Activities of MYM: Saturday Ensembles and the January Music Camp

As part of its regular Saturday program, MYM offers eleven ensembles: two symphony orchestras, two string orchestras, three symphonic bands, two stage bands, a vocal ensemble and a folk fiddle group. Six of these rehearse in the morning, while Melbourne Youth Orchestra, the three symphonic bands and the fiddle group (Melbourne Fiddlers) rehearse in the afternoon. Six of the junior ensembles are named after prominent Australian musicians: Percy Grainger Youth Orchestra, Margaret Sutherland Strings and Henri Touzeau Strings, John Antill Youth Band, George Dreyfus Youth Band and Don Burrows Stage Band. The ensembles rehearse from February to December each year, except in the school holidays. Tutorials are a major part of the program although, since 2004, the tutorial program has been substantially reduced, particularly for the senior ensembles, owing to a decline in funding. Each ensemble performs in concert on average between three and seven times per year.

The January music camps (now summer schools) were established as a separate activity from the regular Saturday music school provided by MYM, although it was expected that the music camps would feed students into the Saturday music program. Initially, the camps catered primarily for music students from the Melbourne area. However, as the reputation of the camps spread, Victorian country students with fewer opportunities to participate in quality ensembles were also attracted. The regional interest became a point of difference between the regular Saturday music program and the music camps, as distance and time sometimes prevented country students from participating in the regular program, but billeting allowed them to attend a week-long music camp. Unlike the regular Saturday music program, the January music camp ensembles did not have

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12 Melbourne Youth Orchestra, Percy Grainger Youth Orchestra, Margaret Sutherland Strings, Henri Touzeau Strings, Melbourne Youth Symphonic Band, John Antill Youth Band, George Dreyfus Youth Band, Melbourne Youth Big Band, Don Burrows Stage Band, Vox Synergy and Melbourne Fiddlers.

13 Warry, Youth Orchestras Australia 48–49.
established names but were generally named after their conductor. For the sake of consistency throughout this paper, I will not use conductors’ names to designate the January music camp ensembles, but refer to each group by its ensemble type and seniority (for example, second orchestra, first symphonic band, senior stage band).

The Concert Committee first ran the January music camp in 1972 as a two-day non-residential event, known as the ‘Melbourne Holiday Music Camp’. It was held at University High School in Melbourne on 28 and 29 January 1972, with concerts given on both the Friday and Saturday nights in the school hall. As seen in the program below (Figure 2), the concerts featured an orchestra, a junior string ensemble, a brass group, a senior wind ensemble and a concert band, which enabled students of primarily government secondary schools to come together to play in higher standard ensembles than would be possible in their own schools.

**Figure 2.** The first Melbourne Holiday Music Camp concert program

The following year, over one hundred musicians attended the second camp, with a staff of two conductors and four tutors. However, by 1982, the camp attracted nearly six hundred participants. It had outgrown its school venues and moved to the four-storey Music School at the Victorian College of the Arts. By the early 1980s the camp consisted of three symphony orchestras, two symphonic bands, a string ensemble, a recorder group and a choral workshop, adding a second string group, a swing choir and a female chorus in the following two years. By 2003, the January music camp had grown to a six-day non-residential camp, with over eight hundred students, fifteen conductors, and seventy tutors.
BACKGROUND TO INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTORS AT THE JANUARY MUSIC CAMP

The first few music camps continued to expand in the size and diversity of the ensemble music making. The conductors included experienced Melbourne music educators and well-known conductors, including Robert Rosen, George Logie-Smith, Eric Austin Phillips and Val Pyers. In the early 1980s, interstate conductors such as Dene Olding\(^{14}\) and Geoff Bailey\(^{15}\) worked at the camp. It was only a matter of time before international conductors became involved in the January music camp, particularly in the area of symphonic bands.

As mentioned above, MYMC was keen to take advantage of the growing interest in symphonic bands in Victorian schools, hence the establishment of MYSB and JAYB in the mid 1970s. As the symphonic band program was largely an American tradition, it was natural that MYMC would look to the United States for expertise in terms of symphonic band educator/conductors. The January music camp represented an opportunity to attract these experts for a short-term (one week), intensive event. It was also hoped that the reputation of these international conductors would attract students to the January music camp who would then be inspired to join the regular Saturday music program. Worland and Hammond were interested in attracting experienced and inspiring American music educator/conductors who were not only good conductors, but were able to influence local teachers, as well as students, in conducting and ensemble performance.

Since 1985, MYM has collaborated with other organisations, such as ABODA and Pan Pacific Music Camps and Yamaha Music Australia, to bring twenty-three largely American conductor/educators to the January music camp. Figure 3 presents a summary of visiting conductors, the ensembles they conducted and activities undertaken in partnership with a collaborating organisation.

Figure 3. Summary of visiting international conductors to the January music camp, 1985–2007 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Conductor and Institutional Affiliation</th>
<th>MYM Ensemble</th>
<th>Other Australian Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Tim Topolewski (Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Larry Curtis (California State University, Long Beach, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Pan Pacific Music Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak (Bucks County Community College, Pennsylvania, USA)</td>
<td>2nd Symphonic Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Patrick Strub (Stuttgart Young Chamber Orchestra, Germany)</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Schaefer (University of Southern California, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Pan Pacific Music Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Larry Curtis</td>
<td>2nd Symphonic Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>3rd Symphonic Band &amp; Stage Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Melbourne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{14}\) At the time, Olding was concertmaster of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Olding is now co-concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony.

\(^{15}\) At the time, Bailey was Lecturer in Brass at the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conductor(s)</th>
<th>1st Orchestra</th>
<th>1st Symphonic Band</th>
<th>2nd Symphonic Band</th>
<th>3rd Symphonic Band</th>
<th>ABODA Conducting School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Patrick Strub</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td>Tim Topolewski (Crane School of Music, State University of New York, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>James Croft (Florida State University, USA)</td>
<td>Don Flickinger (Ferris State College, Michigan, USA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stage Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Patrick Strub</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td>Tim Topolewski</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Larry Wagner (Temple University, Pennsylvania, USA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Larry Wagner</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td>Tim Topolewski</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Dennis Simons</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td>James Croft</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Marguerite Wilder (Woodward Academy, Atlanta, Georgia, USA)</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Music Junction Blackburn</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Patrick Strub</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td>Vondis Miller/Linda Pimentel (University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>2nd Symphonic Band</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Kuehn (Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA)</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>John Williamson (Central Michigan University, USA)</td>
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<td>John Kuehn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Richard Blatti</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Swing Choir</td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Larry Curtis</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>2nd Symphonic Band</td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pickney identifies the music director/conductor as ‘one of the most crucial positions in the youth orchestra organisation,’ an opinion endorsed by other authors she quotes, including David Hagy, the music director for the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra, who identifies the qualities required of an effective music director:

This person [the music director] must have respect for the people with whom he works, and be considerate of individual abilities, ideas, and time. He must be especially sensitive

---

### 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conductor(s)</th>
<th>Orchestra(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Rob McWilliams (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>2nd Symphony Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Travers (Newton North High School, Massachusetts, USA)</td>
<td>Swing Choir</td>
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</tr>
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<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
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### 1999

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<th>Orchestra(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Dale Lonis (University of Missouri, USA)</td>
<td>1st Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Travers</td>
<td>Swing Choir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
<td>Beginner Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Special Guest Clinician</td>
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### 2000

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<th>Orchestra(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Louis Bergonzi (Eastman School of Music, USA)</td>
<td>String Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Larry Curtis (Long Beach Municipal Band, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>2nd Symphony Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

### 2001

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Louis Bergonzi</td>
<td>String Orchestra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Laverty (Syracuse University, New York, USA)</td>
<td>1st Symphonic Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Stage Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Kuehn</td>
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### 2002

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<td>2002</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Laverty</td>
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<td>ABODA Conducting School, Melbourne</td>
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<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Stage Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
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<td>John Kuehn</td>
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### 2003

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<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Stage Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
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### 2004

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<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>Stage Band</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
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### 2007

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jerry Nowak</td>
<td>2nd Symphony Band</td>
<td>ABODA Conducting School, Sydney</td>
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</table>

* Sources of the data are programs from each of the January music camps 1985–2007.

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* Pickney, ‘A Study of Youth Orchestras’.
to the particular needs of young people, have a genuine love for music, and the ability to communicate to student musicians his ideas on what makes music beautiful. Other helpful talents are organisation, leadership, imagination, and patience.\(^\text{17}\)

**Tim Topolewski, the First Visiting International Conductor, and the Establishment of Links between MYMC, Yamaha and ABODA**

The decision to bring international conductors to the January music camp necessarily involved MYMC in the significant extra costs of their fee, travel and accommodation. For example, Dr Tim Topolewski’s fee, expenses and airfare for the 1985 camp were AU$3100.\(^\text{18}\) By comparison, local Melbourne conductors for the 1985 camp were paid an honorarium of AU$130 for the week, as quoted to Russell Hammond by Carol Smitheringale,\(^\text{19}\) who at the time was an Administrator for MYMC. The expense of paying for international conductors is an ongoing problem for Melbourne Youth Music, which has tried to solve it, in part, by sharing the travel expenses with one or more other organisations. MYMC collaborated with other organisations such as ABODA, Pan Pacific Music Camps and Yamaha Music Australia to share the costs and benefits. I will briefly explore the mutual benefits of these collaborations.

Apart from MYMC Chairman Bruce Worland, a key figure in the development of collaborations between MYMC, Yamaha and ABODA in particular was Russell Hammond. Hammond’s background as a music educator/conductor saw him develop a symphonic band program in a large area of outback Queensland, near Roma, from 1977 to 1981.\(^\text{20}\) He joined Yamaha Music Australia in 1982 as Education Services Manager, in which role, according to Carpenter, he ‘continued to promote and develop band programs throughout Australia [through Yamaha] and a recruitment program that he established.’\(^\text{21}\) The timing of Hammond’s employment at Yamaha (between 1982 and 1990) is significant, as this was the period when, according to Carpenter, ‘funds [to buy sets of band instruments] were available from federal programs or school councils that saw the benefit of instrumental music. These instruments were predominantly Yamaha brass and woodwind.’\(^\text{22}\) Consequently, Yamaha was prepared to inject money into music education at this time in order to promote and increase the number of symphonic band programs in schools that would thereby increase its commercial impact. Also during this period (1983–1987), Hammond conducted the Symphonic Band (Wind Symphony) at the Melbourne College of Advanced Education, the main teacher training institution at the time (which subsequently became the University of Melbourne Institute of Education), influencing many future teachers to become more proficient music educator/conductors. Hammond’s link to MYMC was further established when he took over as music director of MYSB from 1986 to 1990.


\(^\text{18}\) Letter from Jan Constable to Tim Topolewski, 26 May 1987. His fee and expenses for the five days were AU$1400. Letter from Jan Constable to Tim Topolewski, 19 October 1987. His airfare is quoted as US$1400 (approx AU$1700 at the time). By 2003 the international fee and expenses were AU$2960, not including the airfare. All archival materials cited in this article are held in the MYM archive.

\(^\text{19}\) Letter from Carol Smitheringale to Russell Hammond, 2 November 1984.

\(^\text{20}\) Biography of Hammond in music camp newsletter, January 1989.

\(^\text{21}\) Carpenter, ‘Concert Bands’ 181.

\(^\text{22}\) Carpenter, ‘Concert Bands’ 180–81.
In mid-1985, Hammond and others established the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association (ABODA) to provide a forum for discussing issues relating to raising the standard of ensemble directing in Australia. At the inaugural Annual General Meeting, Hammond was elected founding president and Worland vice-president, thus immediately establishing a link to MYMC. In the early stages of ABODA’s existence, Hammond was able to secure funding through Yamaha to set up conferences and festivals, utilising visiting conductors from the United States. Worland was also keen that MYMC use these conductors on their visits to Australia.

As part of the wide-ranging brief given to Hammond by Yamaha, which included investigating music programs around the world, Hammond made a number of tours to the United States, establishing contacts among university band directors, most notably Dr Harry Begian at the University of Illinois. Begian’s conducting and program-building experience served as a model for Hammond, who brought Begian to Australia to conduct ensembles at music festivals and conferences (through Yamaha) several times in the 1980s and 1990s. On a visit to the Midwest Band and Orchestra Conference in Chicago in December 1983, Begian introduced Hammond and Worland to Dr Tim Topolewski, a former assistant of Begian’s, and at the time Director of Bands at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Worland subsequently invited Topolewski to serve as visiting conductor at MYMC’s camp in 1985, an invitation Topolewski accepted, writing to Worland that Begian and others ‘continue to speak most highly of your summer camp.’

Topolewski conducted the First Symphonic Band at the January music camp in 1985 and brought a new kind of repertoire for the symphonic band. This was an important aspect of Topolewski’s skill as a music educator/conductor. According to Pickney, ‘One of the most significant components in the continuing success of the youth [ensemble] and director is the ability to choose appropriate repertoire.’ Repertoire must fulfil a multiplicity of requirements: pieces must be of high quality to challenge the students while respecting their capabilities; it must provide a challenge, sustain interest and motivation, and be of artistic and educational value.

An examination of programs of music camps before 1985 shows that the symphonic bands performed mostly transcriptions or popular medleys, except for the occasional band work by Percy Grainger. Topolewski’s program also included some transcriptions, but introduced a march by John Philip Sousa and Alfred Reed’s Otello symphonic suite of 1977, an original work for symphonic band. The Sousa march (The Thunderer) provided an opportunity for Topolewski to instruct the students and assisting tutorial staff in concert march style, something rarely taught to young Australian musicians outside the Armed Forces bands at the time.

Topolewski returned for January music camps from 1988 to 1990. In 1988 he included a Karl King march entitled Hosts of Freedom in his program as well as the hitherto little-known Chorale and Shaker Dance by John Zdechlik. In 1989 he programmed Sousa’s Manhattan Beach march, and Vaughan Williams’s Flourish for Wind Band, while in 1990 he chose three substantial original works for symphonic band: The Hounds of Spring by Alfred Reed, Suite française by Darius Milhaud, and Kaddish by Francis McBeth. Topolewski programmed concert marches for three out of his four visits. Apart from the two Sousa classic marches, the Karl King march provided Topolewski with the opportunity to teach fundamentals of articulation, phrasing,

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23 Letter from Tim Topolewski to Bruce Worland, 20 December 1983.
dynamics, balance and blend, within an art form central to the heritage of symphonic bands worldwide. *Chorale and Shaker Dance, The Hounds of Spring* and *Kaddish* were recent compositions that have since become well established in the band repertory, while both *Flourish for Wind Band* and *Suite française* were original band works by significant twentieth-century composers. All works, while challenging, were achievable by the symphonic bands at the music camps.

Topolewski’s repertoire provided a model that could be used by local conductors. At the same time, in the United States, theses by Stephen Peterson and David Woike were written that explored the establishment of a core band repertoire and the importance of effective programming for music educator/conductors. Peterson interviewed twenty-eight successful university conductors as part of his thesis, finding that all believed that variety of chosen repertoire in terms of musical style, tempo, mood and duration is critical to the success of a performance:

> Each conductor builds concerts around major works, programming pieces which complement the major work and the others. There is also unanimous thought that special attention must be given to the opening and closing works on a concert. The opening work establishes a certain tone for the concert, while the closing work is instrumental in creating the mood which will remain with the audience when the concert is over.\(^{25}\)

Woike’s thesis surveyed thirty-eight university band directors, compiling a list of core repertoire works for a ‘Level 1 University Band’ (approximately the same standard as an advanced secondary school band in Australia, or between the first and second symphonic bands at the January music camp in standard). Woike’s list is shown in Figure 4.

Most of these American symphonic band programming or repertoire developments were not well known by Australian music educators. I can still remember the influence that Topolewski’s repertoire had on me as a young teacher in the late 1980s. I tutored the very accomplished saxophone section of the 1990 band, and others, and I still retain the sound of this ensemble as a model of how a symphonic band can sound.

In the remainder of this article, I focus in particular on two conductors who returned to the January music camp on more than ten occasions: Jerry Nowak and John Kuehn, both from the USA. The timespan of their visits is important as it allows a distinction to be made between short- and long-term goals and benefits.

Short-term goals are those ‘confined within any given concert cycle and/or within any given season that reflect a choice of music that is accessible to the orchestra, and creates as much expertise and understanding [as is achievable] in the performance of the repertoire.’\(^{27}\) In a student’s memory, the defining experience of performing a particular work for the first time is often linked to the person who prepared and conducted it. Long-term goals are more to do with consolidating an individual’s or the organisation’s development over time. First, I will explore the short- and long-term impact of the visiting conductors in general, and these two in particular, on students in the ensembles they directed, including the promotion of ensemble skills, exposure


\(^{26}\) Two young players from this section, Barry Cockcroft and Michael Duke, went on to become professional saxophonists and university level teachers.

\(^{27}\) Pickney, ‘A Study of Youth Orchestras’ 80–81.
to new repertoire, and exposure to inspirational role models. Secondly, I will explore the impact on other staff members working at the January music camps, including mentoring, development of ensemble pedagogy and the role model of the music educator/conductor. Finally, I evaluate the impact on the MYM organisation itself, including an improvement in international profile and consolidation of its educational focus.

**Jerry Nowak and his Work as Part of Collaborations between MYM and ABODA**

As one of his first objectives in forming ABODA, Hammond wanted to recreate in Australia the Midwest Band and Orchestra Conference, which had been running annually in Chicago since 1947. As a first step, ABODA organised a national conference, known as the Australian National Band and Orchestra Clinic (ANBOC), which was held Dallas Brooks Hall in Melbourne in mid 1985, financed largely by Yamaha Music Australia, and attended by over 150 ensemble directors from around Australia, but mainly from Victoria. The conference provided a national forum in which local ensembles could perform, while workshops with orchestral musicians from around Australia allowed delegates to learn many aspects of performance and teaching techniques, such as specific instrument pedagogy, ensemble intonation tendencies, rehearsal technique priorities and conducting.

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**Figure 4. Core repertoire works for level 1 university band** *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bukvich</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>Overture for Winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>Variations on a Korean Folk Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curnow</td>
<td>Phoenix Overture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erickson</td>
<td>Toccata for Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grundman</td>
<td>American Folk Rhapsody (I-IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holst</td>
<td>First Suite in Eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holst</td>
<td>Second Suite in F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jager</td>
<td>Third Suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jager</td>
<td>Sinfonia Nobilissima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latham</td>
<td>Three Chorale Preludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailman</td>
<td>Liturgical Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persichetti</td>
<td>Psalm for Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed</td>
<td>Alleluia! Laudamus Te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spears</td>
<td>Momentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Declaration Overture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Emperata Overture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Three Ayres from Gloucester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaughan Williams</td>
<td>English Folk Song Suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Symphonic Suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Mannin Veen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zdechlik</td>
<td>Chorale and Shaker Dance</td>
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Because of the wide range of skills and experience needed for such an event, Hammond selected Jerry Nowak, a New Jersey based conductor, composer, educator, arranger and performer as the international keynote presenter. Nowak had professional performance experience as a session woodwind and orchestral musician, was proficient on several instruments, had conducted symphonic bands, orchestras and choirs at a variety of levels, was well-versed in jazz and jazz ensembles, had numerous compositions and arrangements published in a variety of styles and was a skilled communicator.

During the first ANBOC conference, Hammond negotiated Nowak's follow-up visit to Melbourne the following January to run a two-week conducting course (initially known as a Band Development Seminar) to be held at the Music Department of the Melbourne College of Advanced Education. Worland and Nowak also discussed the possibility of Nowak staying in Melbourne for an extra week to conduct the second symphonic band at the January music camp, the costs of which would be shared between ABODA and MYMC.

Over the coming months, Nowak discussed his planned concert program with MYMC administrator, Paul Hudson. It was to include two of Nowak’s original works (Celebration March and Visions, op. 1), one of his arrangements (Andrew Lloyd Webber: A Symphonic Portrait), and a classic folk setting (Alfred Reed’s arrangement of Greensleeves). Nowak wrote:

> It is difficult to plan a short concert and have the desired variety and substance in the material. This program should be about twenty minutes. Celebration March is a fine opening march, followed by a beautiful symphonic setting of a familiar folk song (Greensleeves). Visions contains some contemporary symphonic band sounds and the Webber medley makes a fine closing piece.  

As the inaugural ABODA Conducting School and the Nowak Band at the January music camp of 1986 were both deemed to have been successful by Hammond and Worland, Hammond invited Nowak to return to Australia in January 1987 to run the ABODA Conducting School and conduct the third symphonic band and the stage (jazz) band at the January music camp. Nowak’s eventual program for the symphonic band again contained his own original works, as well as the premiere of Fanfare and Processional, a recent composition by Melbourne composer and educator Brian Hogg. Later published by Brolga Music, a Queensland-based music publisher specialising in band and orchestra music, Hogg’s work was subsequently performed worldwide. Hogg was a participant at the 1987 ABODA Conducting School and was specifically invited by Nowak to be involved in the January music camp the next week. Nowak wrote:

> I believe that we must create opportunities for the talented Australian teachers and composers to apply what they have learned in the seminars in a festival situation. The more opportunities that we provide for the teachers who have taken the time to study with me in the seminars, the more progress we will make in stimulating other teachers to study in the future.

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28 Nowak indicated that ABODA were the sponsors of the trip, and that the trip was contingent on the Band Development Seminar ‘having the enrolment necessary to have it run’. Letter from Jerry Nowak to Paul Hudson, 24 September 1985.

29 Letter from Jerry Nowak to Paul Hudson, 3 November 1985.

30 As Brolga publications were marketed and distributed internationally by Ludwig Music Publishing, Fanfare and Processional reached a wide international audience, particularly being performed in the USA.

31 Letter from Jerry Nowak to Jan Constable, 18 May 1987.
Worland and Hammond again invited Nowak to return in January 1988 to direct a new ABODA Conducting School in Sydney and the stage band for MYMC, who also invited Topolewski to return and direct the first symphonic band, as well as the ABODA course in Melbourne. As Topolewski had just moved to a new position at the Crane School of Music in New York in mid-1987, he was unable to be in Australia for the entire three-week period in January 1988, forcing his withdrawal from the ABODA course. MYMC continued with Topolewski, but ABODA, through Hammond, booked Don Flickinger from Ferris State College in Michigan to take the Melbourne Conducting School. Flickinger was then engaged to take the third symphonic band at the 1988 January music camp, therefore maintaining an airfare-sharing arrangement between MYMC and ABODA for two international conductors.

Nowak was initially asked to consider taking a swing choir for the 1989 camp but, having stated his preference to take an instrumental group, remained with the stage band, ‘So that I can keep in contact with the instrumental teachers that I have taught or maybe will teach in future.’ He also continued his involvement with the ABODA Conducting School in Sydney for the second year. For the 1990 January music camp, Nowak conducted the second symphonic band in a program consisting mainly of his own works, but including the same setting of Greensleeves performed in 1986. ABODA had initially planned to use Nowak to establish a conducting course in Perth, but when this was cancelled at short notice, Nowak returned to the Sydney school. Nowak conducted the second symphonic band at the 1991 and 1992 camps. As 1993 was to be the twenty-first camp (and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organisation), Worland invited Nowak to conduct the first symphonic band in recognition of his numerous visits, and commissioned him to write a festive march for the occasion. Subsequently titled Under the Southern Cross and published by Boosey and Hawkes, the work was performed again at the 1995 camp. Nowak continued to work with the first symphonic band at the next two camps (1994 and 1995). Nowak agreed to conduct a swing choir at the 1996 camp, indicating that as part of this arrangement he wanted to do some solo voice coaching, and asking students to bring their solo sheet music to the camp. As Nowak regularly conducted vocal ensembles in his position as Professor of Music at Bucks County Community College in Pennsylvania, he brought considerable expertise to this choir. In 1997, Nowak conducted the second symphonic band for the twenty-fifth anniversary music camp, most of the program consisting of his own works for band. In 1998 he was invited to conduct the second orchestra at the January music camp, having recently conducted the Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra. As an indication of his versatility, this was the fourth different type of ensemble he had been invited to conduct at January music camps. Following the 1998 camp, Worland suggested a changed role for Nowak for 1999, taking on a ‘Special Guest Clinician’ role, visiting all woodwind and brass rehearsals, holding two sessions of thirty minutes with the tutors, and running a reed adjusting clinic. Nowak suggested sessions on breathing techniques,

32 Letter from Andrew Dale to Kristine Mellens, 21 May 1987. ‘We are delighted with your choice of conductors.’
33 Flickinger directed one of the USA’s finest high school bands, according to Hammond, prior to Flickinger’s move to university teaching.
34 Letter from Jerry Nowak to Jan Constable, 31 March 1988.
35 This is a long-running arrangement that continues to the present.
36 Letter from Jerry Nowak to Jan Constable, 17 May 1995.
37 Letter from Bruce T. Worland to Jerry Nowak, 22 September 1998.
tonal imagery, phrasing and style, sessions that he used, along with his ongoing ABODA Conducting School experiences, to develop material on phrasing that would be used in his subsequent book. These sessions were of value to the camp tutors, for they provided additional insights into ensemble phrasing and style.

Nowak conducted the second symphonic band at the 2000 camp, suggesting a program of mainly his own works, including Under the Southern Cross for the third time, but adding two symphonic band classics, Erickson’s Toccata for Band (listed in Figure 4), Barnes’ Yorkshire Ballad, and a transcription of a Brahms Chorale Prelude. The Erickson and Barnes works, while not new, served as reminders of the value of good quality band repertoire at an achievable level for the second band at the music camp. These works, with the addition of the Brahms transcription, gave Nowak ample opportunity to teach the band principles of phrasing and expression, concepts which he considered among the most important in music.

Nowak directed the stage band for the 2001–2003 camps. The many years of collaboration and cost-sharing between MYM and ABODA created the opportunity for Nowak’s repeat visits, allowing him to achieve a deeper understanding of the Australian educational system at both secondary and university level, and to develop more effective teaching strategies. His work in Australia gave Nowak the chance to workshop ideas and concepts on phrasing that he developed year by year. Nowak’s success over his many visits to the camp was based on his all-round experience as a musician, conductor and educator. He was comfortable conducting symphonic bands, stage bands, choirs and orchestras, was a published composer and arranger, and a skilled communicator with both students and staff. His development of ensemble skills, with an emphasis on phrasing, made a lasting impression on the students he conducted, and the staff with whom he worked. All were able to take these concepts back to their regular programs, thus impacting on numerous ensembles around Victoria. He modernised the repertoire used by both organisations. Apart from giving students the opportunity to work with a living composer, Nowak knew many other contemporary symphonic band composers personally, and was able to bring the works he was conducting to life with anecdotes about them and what they wanted from their music.

Other Collaborations, Other Visitors
The collaboration between MYM and ABODA also brought other international conductors to Australia, including Don Flickinger, Larry Wagner, James Croft, Vondis Miller, Linda Pimentel, Richard Blatti, John Laverty and David Waybright. As noted above, Flickinger shared the Melbourne ABODA Conducting School and third symphonic band at the January camp in 1988. The following year Larry Wagner, from Temple University in Philadelphia, ran an advanced conducting course in Sydney for ABODA, and came to the January music camp.

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38 E-mail from Jerry Nowak to Bruce Worland, 1 November 1998.
39 Jerry Nowak and Henry Nowak, Conducting the Music, Not the Musicians (New York: Carl Fischer, 2002). An indication of the influence of Nowak’s Australian experience on the development of his book is that Hammond provides an endorsement on the rear cover.
40 Nowak’s reed adjusting sessions were based on using a reed knife, a perspective favoured by some single reed teachers in the USA, but not common in Australia. Single reed teachers in Australia were more inclined to use fine sandpaper or reed rush to adjust reeds.
41 E-mail from Jan Constable to Jerry Nowak, 24 August 1999.
42 For many years, Nowak took groups of Australian music educators around the trade exhibitions at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Conference in Chicago, introducing them to composers at the publishers’ trade stands.
on Nowak’s recommendation to conduct the second symphonic band. Wagner returned in 1990 to conduct
the first orchestra, although this visit was not shared with ABODA.

In 1991 ABODA and MYMC collaborated to engage James Croft, Director of Bands at Florida State
University, to take the first symphonic band. Croft had already conducted the second symphonic band at
the 1988 camp. The following year, Vondis Miller and Linda Pimentel, from the University of Lethbridge in
Canada, ran both the Melbourne ABODA Conducting School and the first symphonic band at the January
music camp. In 1993 John Williamson, from Central Michigan University, took the second symphonic band
and the Conducting School. Richard Blatti, from Ohio State University, took the first symphonic band and
the Conducting School in 1996. John Laverty, from Syracuse University, conducted the first symphonic band
at the January music camp in 2001 under a United Airlines sponsorship, returning in 2002 to run the ABODA
Conducting School as well. In 2003, David Waybright, from the University of Florida, took the first symphonic
band and the Conducting School.

Pan Pacific Music Camps also collaborated with MYMC to bring international conductors to Australia. Larry
Curtis, Director of Bands at California State University at Long Beach, worked at the Pan Pacific Music Camp in
Sydney in 1986, and conducted the first symphonic band at the January music camp. The following year, after
negotiations with Hammond, MYMC and the Pan Pacific Music Camps collaborated again to bring Dr William
Schaefer from California to Australia to conduct the first symphonic band at the January music camp.

Getting it Right from the Beginning: The Beginner Band Program at the January Music Camp

By 1990, MYMC had been bringing international conductors to its January music camp for six summers. For
the January music camp of 1991, Worland looked to establish a beginner band program, using an international
conductor with strong pedagogical skills across the range of required instruments to make up a symphonic
band. He hoped this initiative would serve as an effective model for similar programs to be developed
throughout Victoria.

The beginner band at the camp was to bring together a group of students who had never played an
instrument before, and teach them to play some simple pieces over the course of the five days. Many wind
band conductors in the USA start out teaching in elementary schools, before moving through junior high to
high school, and then possibly on to teaching in university band programs. Some teachers, however, remain
teaching in elementary schools and become acknowledged as specialists in this area. The USA, therefore,
was the logical place to seek out a beginner band expert. The task for Worland and Constable was to identify
these beginner band specialists, and invite one to establish the new beginner band program at the 1991
January music camp.

Wagner had been a clarinetist with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Dr Ronald Smart, who at the time was Deputy Director of the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, directed the
Pan Pacific Music Camps. The Pan Pacific Music Camps were run for secondary school age musicians during the summer holidays
near Wollongong, New South Wales. Smart described the philosophy of the Pan Pacific Music Camps as: ‘To give each student
as wide a musical experience as possible … The program is varied to include orchestra, wind band, jazz, percussion ensemble,
choir (for everyone), chamber music, and opportunities for solo performance … Each [student] has ten days in which to pursue
intensive studies in his major instrument. Then all take part in preparing a major choral work for performance at the final concert.’


Letter from Paul Hudson to Ronald Smart, 11 July 1985. Hudson confirmed that the two organisations would share the inter-
national and domestic airfare ‘fifty-fifty’ and the individual organisations would each be responsible for fees and expenses.
James Croft, who had conducted at the 1988 camp and was due to return in 1991, recommended elementary band director Marguerite Wilder, based in Atlanta, Georgia. On the basis of Croft's recommendation, Wilder was invited to run the inaugural January music camp beginner band program in January 1991.

The next problem was how to pay for the new program. Apart from the expense of Wilder’s visit (fee, airfare and accommodation), there was also the question of providing instruments for the participants. MYMC sought the assistance of local music retailer Music Junction Blackburn and its Director, Barry Croll. In return for naming rights, Music Junction Blackburn provided a set of musical instruments for the participants and contributed a substantial subsidy towards Wilder’s expenses.

Twenty-nine students participated in The Music Junction Blackburn Beginners Band at the 1991 camp. Apart from receiving group instruction on their instruments, the students learned about ensemble performance techniques and etiquette, played musical games and watched videos about musicians and music-making. MYMC was delighted with the success of the program. When Wilder was unable to return for the 1992 January music camp due to her own teaching commitments, she recommended John Kuehn, from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Kuehn had established a ‘lab school’ program in which he not only instructed the beginning band students, but also trained the university music majors in beginning band instructional techniques. Wilder described Kuehn as ‘a wonderful choice to teach both the new band students and to teach master classes for the teachers’. Music Junction Blackburn was again invited to sponsor the beginner band in 1992 but while it retained naming rights, it made a smaller financial contribution.

As Kuehn’s teaching approach was based on James Froseth’s Comprehensive Music Learning Sequence, he offered to contact GIA Publishing in Chicago to supply Froseth’s _Listen, Move, Sing and Play_ method books for use during the camp. Kuehn approved the idea of having Australian music teachers observe and assist, and offered to give those teachers two one-hour masterclasses, following the dismissal of students in the late afternoon. Kuehn had suggested a number of between twenty-seven and thirty-two students for the 1992 beginner band. Although only twenty-one enrolled, the beginner band was again deemed to be a big success by MYMC, and Kuehn was invited back in 1993. However, only nineteen students enrolled in the 1993 beginner band and MYMC, while supportive of Kuehn and his work, was becoming concerned about

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46 Letter from James Croft to Jan Constable, 7 August 1990. Croft described her as ‘a bundle of energy coupled with a great sense of humour, who is a superb motivator. She has wonderful skills in teaching fundamentals.’


49 Letter from Marguerite Wilder to Jan Constable, 30 May 1991.

50 Letter from Marguerite Wilder to Jan Constable, 30 May 1991.

51 Letter from Marguerite Wilder to Jan Constable, 30 May 1991.

52 Letter from Jan Constable to Barry Croll. The Music Junction Blackburn sponsorship only lasted for the first two years.

53 The Comprehensive Music Learning Sequence (CMLS), developed by Dr James O. Froseth of the University of Michigan School of Music, is divided into three main components: rhythmic instruction, tonal/melodic training, and instrumental development. Classes are begun with synchronised rhythmic movement and sequenced through verbal and rhythmic association. Students develop a sensitivity to pitch and intonation through solfège, which is then applied to instrumental study through the use of ear-to-hand coordination, helping to prevent the development of eye-bound or repertoire-restricted students (from a workshop presented by John Kuehn on 16 March 1993).


the future funding of the band. Other music camp activities were subsidising the beginner band costs, and the assistance of other organisations had been sought unsuccessfully to alleviate these expenses.\(^{56}\) Kuehn offered to work for expenses only and no fee,\(^{57}\) and MYMC finally gained the assistance of Western Metropolitan Region Instrumental Music Coordinator Diana Martin, who guaranteed ‘to find half the airfare (AU$1000),’\(^{58}\) resulting in Kuehn’s reinstatement for the 1994 camp, which twenty-three students attended.\(^{59}\)

A by-product of Kuehn’s work with the beginner band was that increasing numbers of teachers showed an interest in learning his methods. By the 1994 camp, some local teachers had worked with Kuehn for three years, so Worland decided to introduce a beginner band program into the regular Saturday music program, to be run by one of the teachers, Joanne Heaton.\(^{60}\) By 1995, Kuehn was working with up to eight additional teachers during the day, as well as with the students. MYM was still very interested in working with Kuehn, and he conducted at camps between 1995 and 1997. The cost of the beginner band at the January music camp was becoming harder to justify, particularly since it had no perceivable flow-on effect to the Saturday program, following the collapse of the regular Saturday beginner band. MYM Administrator, Jan Constable, indicated to Kuehn that the beginner band program would not be offered at the 1998 camp, due to the amount of money it was losing (AU$2500 in 1996).\(^{61}\) However, following discussions with Kuehn,\(^{62}\) MYM decided to continue the beginner band program, provided that the number of participants could be raised to thirty-five students.\(^{63}\) This number was achieved, and Kuehn was retained at the camp for the next four years.

Worland and Constable were still most anxious to cover the cost of maintaining the beginner band. Although instruments were borrowed from schools, the cost of materials was still significant. In September 1998, Kuehn was able to negotiate a sponsorship deal with GIA Publications, whereby they would supply books and tapes for the camp on an ongoing basis.\(^{64}\)

The biggest expense of the beginner band, however, was Kuehn’s airfare. In September 1999, Worland discussed sponsorship with United Airlines, who were about to begin direct flights between Melbourne and Los Angeles on 6 December. As a result, Kuehn and other USA conductors were able to get free air travel to and from Australia\(^{65}\) for the 2000 and 2001 camps. However, the events of 11 September 2001, and their ramifications for the airline industry, ended the brief United Airlines sponsorship.\(^{66}\) The 2002 January music

\(^{56}\) Letter from Jan Constable to John Kuehn, 8 June 1993. Constable wrote that: ‘Council is very keen to have you back in 1994 but we cannot issue you with an official invitation at this stage until we can see that we can afford you.’

\(^{57}\) Letter from John Kuehn to Jan Constable, 14 June 1993.

\(^{58}\) Letter from Diana Martin to Jan Constable, 27 June 1993. Martin’s initial interest was in setting up a workshop for teachers in the western suburbs of Melbourne with Kuehn after the January camp. She became convinced of the value of Kuehn’s teaching methodology, and worked with him at the next nine camps.

\(^{59}\) Jan Constable, letter to John Kuehn, 31 January 1994. In appreciation of Kuehn’s work at the 1994 camp, Constable wrote: ‘Your work with the youngsters in the Beginner Band Program is nothing short of miraculous and your dedication to the children is admirable. The grateful comments from parents indicate the esteem with which they regard you.’

\(^{60}\) Unfortunately, the Saturday beginning band folded by mid 1996, only two years after it had begun.


\(^{62}\) Discussions included implementing a beginning jazz program.

\(^{63}\) Letter from Jan Constable to John Kuehn, 29 July 1997.

\(^{64}\) Letter from John Kuehn to Jan Constable, 19 September 1998.

\(^{65}\) E-mail from Bruce Worland to John Kuehn, 14 September 1999.

\(^{66}\) MYM was able to get four complimentary tickets from United for the 2002 January music camp.
camp was Kuehn’s eleventh and last.\textsuperscript{67} MYM’s inability to find sponsorship or set up a cost-sharing arrangement with another organisation meant that MYM decided not to employ Kuehn in 2003.\textsuperscript{68} Although Kuehn himself was unable to attend the 2003 camp, his influence remained. Diana Martin, one of his closest local associates during his many visits, conducted the beginner band at the 2003 camp.

Kuehn’s eleven visits raised the profile and status of the beginner band program, not just within MYM, but also in the eyes of music educator/conductors throughout Victoria, as they began to realise the importance of the beginner band as a specialised area, requiring a unique set of skills from the conductor. Firstly, the required pedagogical skills and knowledge of all instruments in the symphonic band were considerable. Kuehn himself could effectively demonstrate and model characteristic tone quality on all of the band instruments.\textsuperscript{69} Secondly, the teaching strategies required when working with younger musicians, most of whom were physically unable to play through a full day of rehearsals, meant that the conductor needed to supplement performances with other activities to reduce mental and physical fatigue. Kuehn himself used a full array of melodic and rhythmic games, flash-cards and call-and-response drills to vary each day’s activities, ensuring that the students remained relatively fresh and enthusiastic through five long days of camp. Kuehn was also willing to mentor local teachers in his methods, and though this opportunity was only taken up in small numbers, those participating acquired valuable skills in multi-instrument teaching and ensemble direction at the beginner band level.

\section*{The Influence of Visiting Conductors on Students}

Hundreds of students performed in ensembles directed by visiting international conductors at the January music camps between 1985 and 2003. More than seventy-five of these students became professional players or teacher musicians, eight of them performed with the Melbourne Symphony, seven joined service bands around Australia, and two became professional conductors.\textsuperscript{70} An indication of the students’ appreciation of the visiting conductors is provided by Samantha Cooke, a flautist in Nowak’s 1986 band, who wrote: ‘I love music so much and I hope to be a music teacher when I leave school. My mum taped our concert and I couldn’t believe how professional we sounded, thanks to you.’\textsuperscript{71}

International conductors brought a ‘sense of occasion’ to performances, which lived on in the memory of participating students, giving them a new appreciation for ensemble performance. For many students, this experience consolidated their resolve to become professional players or music educators. The influence of the visiting conductors has also become particularly apparent in the choice of repertoire and conducting of

\begin{itemize}
  \item String orchestra conductor Louis Bergonzi, who was brought from the Eastman School of Music for three music camps from 2000, was also affected by the demise of the United Airlines sponsorship.
  \item E-mail from Bruce Worland to John Kuehn, 20 May 2002. Worland wrote: ‘I feel somewhat concerned that after eleven years you will not be with us. I am sure there will be both disappointed staff and students when they hear of this news. Please be assured from MYM and me personally, that we all truly acknowledge your excellence as a magnificent teacher and musician. The experiences you have given so many young students over these many years has been outstanding and I am sure that your influence has enabled many young musicians to take up their next steps with confidence and inspiration.’
  \item The instruments normally constituting a symphonic band include flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, horn, euphonium, tuba and percussion. Kuehn’s own principal instrument was the clarinet, on which he could perform to professional standard.
  \item Benjamin Northey and Mark Shiell. Sources of this information are programs from each of the January music camps.
  \item Letter from Samantha Cooke to Jerry Nowak, 3 February 1986.
\end{itemize}
Mathers: Impact of Visiting Conductors

the ensembles directed by the former ensemble members, who as teachers themselves, became discerning in the music they selected for their own ensembles, and acquired a greater interest in improving their own conducting skills. More than twenty of them have been sufficiently inspired to study conducting at the ABODA Conducting Schools. Four of these students have undertaken postgraduate conducting studies in Europe and the USA and all four subsequently returned to Australia and have become successful music educator/conductors or conductors. The beginner band program at the January music camps under Kuehn (1992–2002) produced three students who are currently studying music at university and have become significant contributors in university level ensembles in Melbourne.

The Influence of Visiting Conductors on Staff

A particular feature of the January music camp over the years has been the use of tutorials, alternating with full rehearsals, for the orchestras and symphonic bands. Local music teachers and professional players served as tutors for either one or two ensembles. Although many tutors had limited opportunities to visit the full rehearsals of the visiting conductors, the opportunity to interact at breaks and at evening social functions, as well as the exposure to new repertoire, was a significant influence on local music staff.

In 1986 Rob McWilliams and Ken Waterworth both tutored at the January music camp after having studying with Nowak at the ABODA Conducting School. McWilliams had worked with the Nowak symphonic band trumpets, and Waterworth had worked with the Curtis symphonic band tubas. Both McWilliams and Waterworth went on to have significant careers as conductors in their own right, McWilliams studying in the USA before being appointed Director of Bands at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, and Waterworth creating one of Australia’s leading secondary school symphonic band programs at Eltham High School. Other staff members took advantage of connections made with international conductors at the camps and undertook further study in the USA. Both Nowak and Kuehn left a lasting legacy through the staff members with whom they worked, encouraging them to develop their own skills and concepts of ensemble performance, and serving as effective role models as conductors and teachers.

Summary and Conclusions

Melbourne Youth Music began as an educational initiative, and the educational role of the organisation, while not compromising standards, has influenced the diversity and focus of the programs offered. The role of the organisation has always been to provide an extension activity for young Victorians to participate in ensembles at their level of experience, taking the skills they learned back to their own school and community ensembles. Although the January music camp has always been run as a separate activity, it is an important feeder for the regular Saturday program.

MYMC brought its first international visiting conductor to Australia for the January music camp in 1985. Between 1985 and 2003, twenty-one visiting international conductors worked with the full spectrum of

72 Benjamin Northey, Joanne Heaton, Jemima Bunn and Cindy Louey.
73 Sara Calla, clarinet, Monash University; Robyn Lowenstein, euphonium, University of Melbourne; and Benjamin Anderson, trombone, University of Melbourne.
74 Three visiting conductors, Croft, Dale Lonis and Laverty, made available opportunities for local conductors to complete Masters degrees in conducting. Rob McWilliams and Andrew and Jenny Mathers attended Florida State University with Croft, Cindy Louey attended the University of Missouri with Lonis, and Amy Wert attended Syracuse University with Laverty.
ensembles at the January music camp, including the first and second orchestras, the string orchestra, all four of the symphonic bands (including the beginner band), the swing choir and the stage band.

So what was the impact of visiting conductors who came to the January music camp? First, they brought experience in American ensemble repertoire and style, particularly in the symphonic band area, that was not well known by local conductors. In particular, the visiting conductors used concert marches to teach articulation and balance. Second, they made a significant investment in local musicians, both staff and students, by providing benchmark performance standards and challenging repertoire for students, and mentoring and resources to staff. Third, they brought an emphasis on ensemble skills and ensemble teaching that drew on a different tradition to what most Victorian teachers had been trained—a shift from a British model of music education to an American symphonic band model, as noted by Carpenter.75 In line with the educational philosophy of MYM, the selected international conductors were also fine teachers who were proud to be educators, fulfilling Pickney’s model of the effective youth ensemble director as one possessing ‘a high level of training in both the fields of music and education, especially conducting and music education.’76 Most of the visiting conductors were also conducting teachers in their home institutions. They shared with students and teachers their knowledge of the conductor’s art, together with a practical knowledge of instruments and teaching methodology.

Finally, bringing international conductors to Australia gave MYM a higher international profile than it might otherwise have had. The January music camp became known throughout the USA in particular through using US-based conductors, who returned praising the event among their colleagues.77 When MYM came to engage new conductors, many international invitees had already heard of the January music camp. The friendship and support of international conductors granted MYM an international status as an organisation, which it used in its recent fight against government funding cuts.78 At this time, a number of international conductors wrote to the Victorian government in support of MYM’s funding application, contributing to the government’s decision to reconsider the severity of the proposed cuts. As a result, the government, as part of its funding re-negotiation, made available AU$250,000 per annum to MYM, guaranteed for 2006 and 2007.

Acknowledgements
I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance provided by Bruce Worland, Jan Constable and Tim Kelly of MYM in generously allowing me access to the substantial MYM archive. I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by Dr Kay Dreyfus, whose insightful comments and suggestions were invaluable in the drafting of this article.

75 Carpenter, ‘Concert Bands’ 180.
77 A recent example of this occurred in the National Band Association Journal 46.3 (May 2006): 12–13, in which the NBA Executive Secretary, Thomas Fraschillo, who conducted at the camp in 2005 and 2006, praised MYM and the camp in a two-page article.
78 In late 2005, MYM submitted a funding request to the Victorian Education Department through the Strategic Partnerships Program for just over one million dollars for three years (2006–2008). MYM learned in December 2005 that it would receive only AU$300,000 (AU$100,000 per annum) of that funding.
The ‘Words about Music’ (WAM) course at the Australian Youth Orchestra’s National Music Camp aims to sharpen the writing—and talking—skills of its participants, most of whom see themselves as future music journalists. It is not easy to write well or to talk well about music, but even those who naturally command a felicitous turn of phrase will quickly find themselves at a loss for something to say if they can’t, in the first place, listen well. My approach to teaching the ‘Words about Music’ course emphasises listening to music and talking about it as the necessary precursor to being able to write anything remotely sensible on the subject. This article explains how that happens, with many examples taken from actual WAM sessions.

A perceptive observation becomes a cliché when it is repeated too often. Part of that process is that no one can recall who said it in the first place. Another part of it is that the quote becomes rather flexible in its diction and key words are changed. For example, many people will tell you that it was Elvis Costello who said, ‘Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.’ And indeed he did, in an interview. But did he say it first? If you search the internet, you will find the quote attributed to Clara Schumann, Igor Stravinsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, Thelonious Monk, Frank Zappa, David Byrne and Laurie Anderson, to name only a few. Some of them seem to have said that ‘Talking about music is like dancing about architecture,’ and so right there is a small example of the changeability of diction.

One should always try to avoid clichés. They are the opposite of original speech and therefore of original thought. If we admit clichés, our words—and so our thoughts—will consist of drab hand-me-downs. Yet this particular cliché is interesting, not so much for who said it, as for what it implies. Mostly, the epithet is trotted out in support of the essentially anti-intellectual view that writing (or talking) about music is impossible. In

1 Timothy White, ‘A Man out of Time Beats the Clock,’ *Musician* 60 (October 1983): 52.
fact, that is not at all what this simile implies. Dancing about architecture is not impossible. It is difficult, certainly, and it would require real imagination to do it well. This is also true of talking and writing about music. It is not easy, but it can be done. While most musicians might not write about music very often, we all talk about it all the time.

But what are we attempting to achieve when we discuss music? And how do we find the right words for this? These are the two questions that preoccupy the students who attend the ‘Words about Music’ course run by the Australian Youth Orchestra at its National Music Camp each January. It is a course that I have co-tutored now four times. The first thing the participants must come to appreciate—and it is vital for any music writer to be regularly reminded of it—is that every time they attempt to express music in words they are bound, at some level, to fail. There will always be a gap between the music itself and the words written about it. We try to bridge it, we want to convey the sound of the music in words alone, and we never fully succeed. Mostly, we do not even come terribly close.

There is a pleasing paradox here. Compared to words, music will always fail in its attempts to express specific emotions. Listeners will never agree about musical meanings: your tragic, is my autumnal; my triumphant is your bombastic. The composer, as the poet W.H. Auden pointed out, cannot ‘translate’ specific ideas, feelings and events. But by the same token, words, which are the perfect vehicle for translating such things, fail when it comes to rendering the sound of music. In making the attempt, however, writers of such words about music can, perhaps, draw their readers closer to the music, and that alone is a laudable aim and a laudable outcome.

My own yardstick for good writing about music is whether or not I am forced to put down the book or article I am reading in order to go and listen to the music itself. Good music writing should direct our attention to the music. It has no other raison d’être. If the music is familiar, the writing should seek to make it unfamiliar. The pianist Glenn Gould felt there was no point in recording a well-known piece unless one had a new interpretation. Equally, there is no point in writing about music unless one has something new to say. For this enterprise to be successful, and for the reader to feel drawn back to the music, the writing must come out of the music—either from the score, if there is one, or from a performance or recording. It is always surprising how many of the students in ‘Words about Music’ think, at first, that to write about a piece of music one simply goes to other writings about the same piece of music and, as in the worst sort of academic writing, makes a sort of critical précis of them. You might get away with such a tactic if you are writing a program note. It will not be an annotation with much insight, but it could pass muster with an undemanding editor. However when it comes to music criticism, you must address what you hear. This is why the practice of criticism is such a useful teaching tool for writing about music in general. The writer is forced to describe and assess what actually happened; anything else will be irrelevant and readily perceived as such by the reader. One of the main qualities the reader looks for in a critic is the ability to place a musical experience in a useful and correct context. It follows, then, that a good critic writing for the general public will, first, have excellent ears and, second, the widest possible musical knowledge. He or she must be as much of an expert as possible, especially in contemporary music. Of course, this would go without saying if the critic’s field were rock or jazz, but it is surprising that one continues to come across classical critics who feel that new music is not really for them. There is no place for equivocation here: simply put, these people have no business writing criticism at
all, and editors have no business publishing their writing. The first and most important context for any piece of music, whether by Gabrieli, Grieg or Gordon Kerry, is the music of the present day.

The other skill we look for in our critics is an ability to make us feel we were there, when most likely we were not (only a tiny proportion of those reading a review in a newspaper will actually have been present at the concert). This is also partly a matter of context, but it is especially closely tied to listening and to the critic’s ability to turn the experience of listening into words. To be able to do this, any music writer has to draw close to the music and draw the reader close. If one cannot listen well, one will not write well. The distinguished English musicologist and composer Wilfrid Mellers once told me that if you are not writing technically about music, you are not writing about music at all, you are writing about something else. So while, in a piece of music writing, it may be legitimate and even desirable to tell anecdotes, to give dates and to quote reviews, it is never enough. The music itself must be addressed head on, and the right words—or at least the best words—must be found. They should always be as simple as possible.

Each year, AYO accepts six participants for ‘Words about Music’. In recent times the students have been predominantly female: in 2004 there were three women and three men, but in 2005 and 2006 they were all women. Very few of the participants seem to regard music journalism as a vocation. Most of them are exploring the possibility of widening their career options. Some are essentially scholars hoping to broaden the appeal of their writing, some are composers aware that they are unlikely ever to make a living simply by inventing music, some are singers and instrumentalists who have suffered injuries in the pursuit of a performing career but still hope to put their musical education to good use. Between them they bring a wide range of relevant previous experience to the course. Indeed, when selecting the participants, my fellow tutors and I have tended to look for the best possible mix of talents on offer. Because of the intensely practical nature of the two weeks, with one deadline after another, it is essential that the group contains a couple of people who can really write (both well and quickly), at least one more with experience in editing and, ideally, someone with a bit of radio experience.

WAM covers a lot of ground, the participants reviewing concerts and recordings, compiling program notes, and tackling all manner of music-related journalism, including interviewing and writing profiles. Really the only sort of writing about music that is not attempted is the academic sort. (Indeed, academic writing is actively discouraged: WAM aims to help its participants write for and inform a general music audience.) During the two weeks of National Music Camp, the WAM group must furnish the administrative office with a steady stream of program notes for the public concerts, and at the end of the camp produce a magazine (Musica Fever) for distribution to the other 250 students and tutors. Most of the articles for the magazine will have been specially written, but typically there will also be a selection of the best reviews, features and interviews written over the past fortnight. Radio production and presentation have also become a fixture of the WAM course, two fifteen-minute documentary features being produced in-house for broadcast during the time of the camp itself on ABC Classic FM. Additionally, the students will usually have some opportunities for public speaking, perhaps by introducing concerts or speaking to groups of their fellow students about the music they are rehearsing.

That, then, is the business side of the course. But (to me) there is a more important activity, which yields no obvious result. At the end of the camp there is little to show for it, except what the participants might
take away in their heads. On the four occasions that I have co-tutored WAM—in 1998 with Martin Buzacott, and in 2004, 2005 and 2006 with Anni Heino—each day has begun with some time devoted to listening. We call these sessions ‘Ear Openers’ and the idea is to connect the act of listening to that of finding appropriate words with which to discuss the music. It sounds like a rather obvious tactic, but it represents an antidote to the too-familiar practice of writing about music without recourse to the sound it makes.

The act of listening is a leveller of sorts. When we sit in a concert auditorium, the variable acoustics of the hall notwithstanding, we will all hear the same music. But we will surely not all have the same experience. Some of us will be distracted by the décor or by the day’s events; some will be more experienced listeners than others. Significantly, some of us might recognise the music we are hearing, while some might know it thoroughly and others will be hearing it for the very first time. When the WAM tutors have selected music for our ‘Ear Openers’ we have tended to pick pieces or extracts from pieces that we can be fairly sure the students will not recognise. This is not done to trick them, but to ensure that we end up talking about what we have actually heard. If the students are played a piece that is familiar to them—let’s say it is the Russian dance from Stravinsky’s *Petrushka*—then when the moment comes to talk they will tend to rely upon what they already know. The sound of *Petrushka* will be the signal to bring up Russian folk music, Stravinsky’s debt to Rimsky-Korsakov, Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, musical modernism before World War I, and so on. This might all be important information, but it will consist mostly of facts and opinions that have been remembered rather than genuine responses to the music that has just been heard. If, however, the music is not familiar, then the students are forced to engage with the sound of the music itself—there is simply no other option—and their responses are more likely to be fresh and germane.

In these sessions we discuss rather than write, although in 2006 the participants were also encouraged to post comments on a blog at a specially constructed website, and consequently some of their observations and comments were preserved. Here is what one WAM participant, Angharad Davis, blogged about Rufus Wainwright’s song ‘Cigarettes and Chocolate Milk’ from the album *Poses*:

> Wainwright has an uncommon gift for expansive melodic lines, guaranteed to test the lungpower of imitators everywhere. It reminds me of the phrase ‘endless melody’, but whereas Wagner stitched his out of lots of tiny melodic moments, Wainwright stretches time to bursting point and barely snatches a breath at the end of a line before the melody rolls forward again. Perhaps this is what makes it such an effective moment when he modulates from major to minor and back again.

> His music is densely layered but not self-consciously so, and not at the expense of lucidity of line—there is always lots to listen to so it is sure to reward repeat hearings (and indeed, we’ve had it on three times since then). In live performance, the use of particular instruments at one expressive moment and nowhere else, leaving the players to count rests for the rest of the time, would perhaps be frowned upon as needlessly extravagant. In recording, however, it is sublime.

What I like about these comments is the engagement with the music and the attempt to relate it to music that the writer already knows. In a nutshell, this is what a music critic does.
From the players’ point of view, National Music Camp might concentrate on a rather narrow band of music, orchestral and chamber, most of it European and composed during the last 200 years—this, after all, remains the staple diet of the classical concert hall. But the range of listening for the WAM students is far wider, aiming to take the participants into unfamiliar territory. Naturally enough this helps with the provision of musical extracts that the participants will fail to recognise, but it also means that, along with selections from roughly a thousand years of Western art music, the participants are also confronted by pop tunes and modern jazz, gamelan and bluegrass, Sardinian shepherd songs and Karelian laments. (It is always surprising how limited the students’ listening has been. One hardly expects familiarity with Sardinian or Karelian music, but one imagines they will bring a good knowledge of the core classical repertoire, and usually even that is lacking.)

Implicit in the listening choices we make for the WAM participants is the notion that one should be able to listen to all manner of music and make something of it. This is not to subscribe to the cliché that music is a language that speaks to all nations—after two weeks of such broad listening, it should be perfectly clear to all involved that music is nothing of the sort—but it is to suggest that when one hears sounds consisting of pitches and rhythms and timbres, one should at least be able to make a simple analysis of these basic elements and then say something technical about the way in which they relate to each other. This will not be anything like the whole story, but it is the best possible starting point for a critical appraisal, whether one is listening to Burundi drumming or Brahms.

During our ‘Ear Openers’ we play the piece under consideration two or three times, discussing it after each hearing. We always ask that if a participant actually recognises the music, they at first keep this information to themselves so that they do not influence the listening of their colleagues. Indeed we seldom invite people to guess the identity of a piece, because that is not the aim of this exercise. Following the initial hearing there will usually be some talk of technical matters. What instruments are involved? What voices? How does the harmony sound? Is there an obvious melodic line? Is the music contrapuntal and, if so, is it a strictly composed counterpoint or a more spontaneous sort of heterophony? There are dozens of these questions, not perhaps asked in such a direct manner but, so to speak, in the air, as we attempt to begin talking about what we have heard. On the whole we have found that the more the music resembles something from the canon of Western classical music, the more jargon—dare I say the more clichés?—the students tend to employ when they discuss it.

Before listening to the piece a second time one of the tutors might give a small amount of information about the music that will help the second listening. If there are words being sung, the text (and where necessary, or possible, the translation) might be provided. Perhaps a score will be passed around. Depending upon the nature of the music, and the nature of the extra information, the second hearing can offer quite a different experience, usually rather more intense.

An extreme example of this occurred in relation to a recording of the American song ‘John Henry’. This traditional song concerns the exaggerated deeds of a mythical giant of a man, stronger than his mates and willing to work until he drops—an American Stakhanovite indeed—who finally dies ‘with his hammer in his hand.’ It is sung on the recording by African-American men (that much seems initially clear) in a classic call-and-response mode, accompanied only by some sort of percussion—it might be the hard rattle of a gourd. The energy and indeed joy that emanate from this recording find their greatest expression in the complex and
(presumably) improvised vocal heterophony, anything up to six voices singing versions of the same melodic lines, with added calls of encouragement (‘Talk it, talk it, talk it!’) that would be perfectly in keeping with the extraneous cries surrounding a gospel song.

So far, so good. With only a little prompting from the tutors, the students will be able to discuss all these aspects of the music. But what cannot be discerned merely from listening to the recording is that the performers are prisoners, members of a chain gang at Angola State Penitentiary (also known as Parchman Farm) in Louisiana. The percussive sound is produced by their hoes hitting the stony soil, and the singers themselves—recorded in 1948 by the great ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax—do not have names, but numbers. We listen again to Prisoner 22 and the rest of the group, but now the experience is considerably changed. That energy and joy we heard: well, it is still energy and still joy, but given a stark new context. Suddenly, it seems, there is something far more ‘real’ about this ‘performance’ than virtually any other music we have ever listened to. We wonder about the performers, all of them surely now dead. We wonder what their crimes were? Are we listening to the singing of murderers and rapists? Does that alter the way we listen? (You bet it does!) We wonder about a record company that charges the public $30 for a CD of this music, and we wonder, also, whether we have any business bringing our critical faculties to bear on these two-and-a-half minutes of singing.

Karelian lamenting is another example of music so real, so much a part of life (and indeed death) that we feel we should not barge in with our judgments. It is not even comfortable to listen to this singing, and this much is evident even from an ‘innocent’ hearing. The singing tradition is now nearly extinct, but it involved a woman whose job it was to attend a funeral or a wedding and sing, through her tears and sobs, in an attempt to make others start crying. She was part shaman, part grief counsellor, and part psychodrama leader. We listen and after just a few seconds realise that we are hearing from the singer real crying and real sobs. Sometimes the sobs are used as a punctuating device in the song, an audible intake of air—which in any case is the function of sobbing—to mark the separation of lines or verses. The effect of this music on the students can be extremely powerful, because this time most of the non-musical information is contained within the sound of the music itself. We scarcely need to be told that, like some wizened product of the Actors’ Studio, this singer is summoning up memories of her own long-dead mother in order to produce her tears and encourage the tears of others. We can hear it in the music. And of course those matters of critical ethics are as pertinent as ever.

Among other issues, listening to music such as the singing of a chain gang or an elderly Finnish woman lamenting the death of her mother makes us wonder about the fundamental purpose of music criticism. For if we feel somehow awkward ‘reviewing’ these recordings, why should we feel any less awkward making notes at an orchestral concert? The short answer to this question is that as music writers we must be able to think about the pitches and rhythms and timbres, the technicalities of music, in separation from their social context (as well as within it). The somewhat longer answer is perhaps best revealed by asking a series of other questions. Can we reveal the secrets of the music—what Edward Said, writing of Brahms, called ‘the music of the music’—by noting the purely technical components of an experience that most listeners might want to respond to in a non-technical way? Can this knowledge draw us closer to the creative act? Can it reveal the intent of the singer, player or composer? Can the technical parameters of the music illuminate
the social context in which they were created or re-created? The answer to all these questions is yes, but it depends upon a listener who is sharp-eared and unencumbered by clichés.

I mentioned above that the young music journalists who participate in WAM have between them a range of experience. They also have a range of aspirations. The most common one that I hear is from students (men as well as women) who want to be ‘the next Margaret Throsby’, presenting classical music recordings on ABC Classic FM and interviewing guests—usually not professional musicians—about their lives and their favourite music. It is by no means a meagre aspiration. Some of the students have an eye to the increasingly limited opportunities afforded in the mainstream print media for writing profiles of musicians. What we have seldom found among WAM participants is a burning desire to be a music critic. Perhaps we should not be surprised. The arts pages of Australia’s daily newspapers no longer seem to care much about music reviewing. Major premieres are routinely ignored. It is not unusual for reviews to be written but never published.

What have we lost? In regard to classical music, I think we have lost several things. In the first place the mainstream print media no longer regard classical concerts as important and this has quite quickly—in perhaps just a single generation—resulted in the marginalising of classical music in our culture. The clearest evidence of this is in our schools. Secondly, because our ‘journals of record’ no longer feel a duty to review new works, we are also in the process of losing our musical history. It is not being written down and when, one day, researchers need to know how certain pieces of music were received at their premieres, they will have nowhere to look. But thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, we are as a society losing our ability to listen—to classical music, of course, but to other things as well.

Critics once helped to hone that ability. In writing about concerts and recordings, in describing as simply and accurately as possible (and even allowing for all the limitations of language) what they actually heard, they in turn helped us to hear. In providing a wider musical context—and perhaps a social or historical context too—they helped us to think about what we heard. In other words they sharpened the audience’s listening skills and its critical faculties. You might say they provided the general public with a less intensive version of the training that the tutors at WAM aim to offer their students.

Clichés not only multiply, they grow. They take over. The biggest cliché troubling classical music today is the general public’s very perception of that music: that it is for elites, and that those elites are somehow a threat to the way of life of normal people. One can—and I sometimes do—get very angry about this particular cliché, because, silly as it may be, it is depriving most of a generation of people of access to an immense body of knowledge. Classical music—actually, all music—is knowledge in sound, and it can only be fully understood in sound. Ultimately, it is also best ‘discussed’ in sound—the best criticism of a piece of music being another piece of music—but even that discussion is greatly helped by those who would have the temerity to dance about architecture.
Notes on Contributors

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Andrew Ford is a composer, writer and broadcaster, and has won awards in all three capacities, including the prestigious Paul Lowin Prize for his song cycle, Learning to Howl. His music has been played throughout Australia and in more than forty countries around the world. He was Composer-in-residence with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1992–1994), held the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Composer Fellowship (1998–2000) and was awarded a two-year fellowship by the Music Board of the Australia Council for 2005–2006. Beyond composing, Dr Ford has been an academic in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong (1983–1995). He has written widely on all manner of music and published five books. He wrote, presented and co-produced the radio series ‘Illegal Harmonies’, ‘Dots on the Landscape’, and ‘Music and Fashion’. For the past twelve years, he has presented ‘The Music Show’ each Saturday morning on ABC Radio National.

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David Pear has co-authored or edited a number of volumes about Grainger, including (with Malcolm Gillies), *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger 1914–1961* (OUP, 1994), and *Portrait of Percy Grainger* (University of Rochester Press, 2002). His most recent book, *Self-portrait of Percy Grainger* (OUP, 2006), co-written with Mark Carroll (University of Adelaide) and Malcolm Gillies (then at the Australian National University and now at City University, London), presents an annotated selection of Grainger’s autobiographical writings. He has also written on the history of the Australian Youth Orchestra, and on the British Edwardian music scene. He is an Associate Professor at the Australian National University, and a Fellow at Yale University.
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