

Flinders Quartet Newsletter

April 2008

Of Barrel Rooms: What is it about barrel and riddling rooms? Huntington, Domain Chandon, Coriole and many others have been home to fine chamber festivals in what you might think of as an industrial environment. Far from it. Perhaps it is the synergy between new oak and old maple, together with strangely good acoustics. Or perhaps the thought of maturing wine, the enjoyment and memory of which is, like a fine chamber music performance, both temporal and spiritual, enjoyed in the moment, yet well remembered.



Flinders next barrel room performances will be on the weekend of 3-4 May at the Coriole Vineyard in South Australia's McLaren Vale. We are all looking forward to this event, not the least because our good friend Ian Munro will be performing with us in our first opportunity to play together his "Divertissement sur le nom d'Erik Satie". This work we commissioned specially and premiered last year, unfortunately without Ian who was recovering from a car accident. The program also includes

the Schubert Quintet in C, in which we will be joined by Julian Smiles, cellist from the Australia Ensemble. If you have friends in South Australia, tell them about the festival. It will be a feast of a weekend, including musically! (See www.coriolemusicfestival.com/musicfestival/)

And Winter Weekends: We are really excited about the 3MBS Melbourne Chamber Music Feast which runs from 27-29 June. The genesis of this festival was our belief that something should be done to fill the mid year gap every second year when no Chamber Music Australia competition is scheduled. A sort of replacement for "Chamber Music in the City". Where else would you go in these off years? (Well, Townsville perhaps, but that's a long way away.) The weekend will open with a Gala Music and Wine event on Friday 27 June, program to be announced on the night (although you can expect some Martinu, Brahms, Shostakovitch, Bartok and Schubert). Our ensembles include the cream of the Melbourne scene: apart from Flinders, you will hear the Tailem and Hamer quartets (Tin Alley can only be there in spirit), Seraphim, Freshwater and Benaud Trios, Ensemble Liaison and Duo Sol. There will be masterclasses, a talk by a leading instrument maker and an on-site café in the Conservatorium's Tallis Wing. Concerts will be broadcast live on 3MBS with Peter Birch presenting for us. The weekend will end with a jazz filled after-party at Naughton's Pub. You would have to be enthusiastic about all that! Lock in the dates. Call your mates. This weekend is to savour (aurally and orally)!

Bums on Seats: Churches, artists colonies, convents, they all seem to have one hard edged failing: the seats are hard and uncomfortable. Well, Flinders' audiences at Montsalvat are all extremely happy that the management has refurbished the Barn Gallery seating. You can now enjoy a Flinders subscription concert in comfort, so those of you who grumbled in the past about the chairs can put it all behind you. If you see what we mean.

Building the Future: As an ensemble we have been proud of the reputation Flinders has gained as mentors and educators. We fall firmly into the category of musicians who do this work because we enjoy it and have a firm belief in the need to nurture young talent for the greater good. We have, in the last six months, been involved with the Young Australian Concert Artists regional residency program, Zoe tutored at National Music Camp, and, more recently we helped with the Australian Youth Orchestra's Young Symphonists program. We collaborated with Keith Crellin in this program (and

Zoe was happy that husband Geoff Collinson was involved, leading the brass and woodwind section of the program).

Flinders is also planning to run a special string quartet program with Melbourne Youth Music .We will draw together and develop a new string quartet of secondary school age students.

We also plan to develop educational inputs for The Music Page (www.themusicpage.com). Check out this new website where you can revisit our final 2007 subscription concert. (Check “The Stage” section or just do a simple search for “Flinders”). You can even rate our performances. We’d love to know what you think. (Well, we think we’d love to know what you think!) Incidentally, The Music Page will be involved in the Adelaide International Cello Festival during April, so you can look forward to hearing some great cello music from that event.



Singapore: Looking ahead we have an exciting opportunity coming up in Singapore this October. We have been selected by the Shaw Foundation under their “Ones to Watch” program which focusses on artists on a strong upward trajectory. We will do three concerts, one in the magnificent new Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, as well as a master class.

The Shaw Foundation was established by the family who founded Singapore’s largest film distribution and cinema organisation. Do let your Singapore friends know about this. We will give more information on the website as soon as we have the detail.

Help Along the Way: One of the challenges for a string quartet such as Flinders is juggling the administrative work load. When we got together in 2000 there was no thought in our minds how much time would eventually have to be spent on non musical pursuits. But now help is at hand in the person of Sarah El-Atm who recently joined us part time. Sarah will be helping Flinders, initially half a day a week, in a range of tasks. She has a background in orchestral management and Ethnomusicology. Sarah is also helping out with the 3MBS Melbourne Chamber Music Feast.

See you all at our next concert. And don’t forget to bring your friends.

Erica, Matt, Helen & Zoe

