

PERSONNEL UPDATE

- Wilma recovering from
 - shoulder surgery - recovery is on track
 - knee surgery - which was painful but recovery is progressing
- Zoe Black engaged for February 2024 Emerge composer program
- Wilma is on track to return to normal duties February 27

ACTIVITY SINCE DECEMBER 2023 BOARD PAPER

There has not been very much rehearsing/performing over the last three months given the Christmas period but nevertheless, lots of activity!

- FQ musicians were engaged by the Australian World Orchestra to play pre-game at the Boxing Day test match, performing for high net worth corporate guests and ticket holders.
- Ascend composer program participants have been selected with the help of Carl Vine; the standard of applicants was incredibly strong with a number of composers applying as Australians who are living abroad. Many cited the appeal of the amount of time and collaborative approach FQ takes to its activity.
- Unsuccessful applicants have been invited to have a 10 minute phone consultation with Zoe; so far 16 have booked times with many stating it's the only time they have been offered such feedback.
- From the unsuccessful applicants, several have been identified as being worthy of other opportunities, either with FQ or pairing with other organisations.

Creative Development

- Work has begun on the musical letter writing project between Melody Eötvös and Rishin Singh
- Work has continued with researching and developing the Mendelssohn project with Richard Bryony and Zoe to meet to discuss scope of Mendelssohn incidental music

MRC Making Waves project

FQ worked with secondary school composer Chloe Dewhirst from Wodonga as part of the December 2023 MRC Making Waves program. It was live streamed as part of the Virtual School Victoria program and Zoe has maintained contact for opportunities for her to observe composer programs in 2024.

2024 CONCERTS

- In 2024, Montsalvat, MRC and St John's Flinders concerts will run full length with interval.
- Weekday 1pm concerts at St Johns Southgate are one hour in duration and have replaced the 1pm MRC concerts. We are considering running a short Q&A session with two members of the quartet after these concerts to engage the audience and for the secondary school students who attend.
- Open rehearsals will continue as in previous years, and in 2024 the Library at the Dock (Docklands library) is partnering with FQ for these events, providing venue and marketing support
- A pilot "community concert" will be held at the Library at the Dock Performance Space on July 27
 - Library at the Dock is also partnering with FQ for this event, providing venue and marketing support
 - This concert is aimed at reducing barriers and attracting audiences wanting to try chamber music with short concerts, at no cost, and bringing the City of Melbourne (CoM) community together (as part of FQ's CoM 2-year funding)
 - 30-40 minute concert with repertoire to comprise movements/elements of Beethoven from 2024 Program 2
 - While it won't be advertised as a "relaxed performance" we will hire the Community Space outside the Performance Space to enable the door to remain open and allow for audience to easily exit and enter, if desired
 - The concert is timed to serve as a practice performance for the quartet
 - To be advertised to Docklands community, City of Melbourne U3A audiences, family friendly websites, Melbourne Youth Music Community
 - Katherine and Zoe are working with Sarah to ensure the messaging for this concert is clear and directed to appropriate groups

TICKET SALES

- MRC over 50% sold - far exceeding previous levels at this time of year
- Montsalvat nearly 50% sold
- Flinders needs support
- Southgate relatively smooth but needs support

COMPOSER ACTIVITY - ESTABLISHED/EMERGE/ASCEND

Commissioned composers:

- Gordon Kerry's new work commissioned by Siobhan Lenihan will be premiered in our first subscription program
- Bryony Marks is writing some incidental music to tie together our project about Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, to be performed in the third subscription program
- A Tale of Two Composers - Melody Eötvös and Rishin Singh:
 - A musical letter writing project between two composers funded through the current A Tale of Two composers campaign
 - Development throughout 2024

- This project is different to normal commissions and is highly organised with a workflow map to ensure it stays on track. The quartet will be involved in the development process and will provide the composers with recordings of various sections where needed.
- Premiere in the 2025 subscription season as part of the 25th birthday celebrations.
- Ollie Mustonen (Finland) is a composer we are eager to commission. Zoe has had discussions with Anthony Adair about funding this commission which could lead to international connections.
- Idea of commissioning international composers with a reciprocal Australian composer is still viable.

Emerge:

- Premiere Emerge performances confirmed for 21 February 2024 at Noisy Ritual (an urban winery) in Brunswick. The concert will also be live streamed on digital.flindersquartet.com
- The scores and live streamed performance will be available on FQ Digital

Ascend:

- Ascend program had 68 submissions
- Standard of submission very high
- \$6,000 fee payable to the four successful Ascend applicants, thanks to Ian Potter Foundation funding
- Concert for Ascend to be held at the Monash David Li Sound Gallery with the University supporting the project with venue hire (staffing and ticketing costs will still apply)

Curation of composer works:

- There is now an identifiable need to devote time for curation of commissioned works on FQ Digital in a way that enables future performances. At the moment we don't have the human resources to facilitate this but have earmarked it for future funding requests.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- **ASEAN 50th ANNIVERSARY**
 - FQ has been invited to play for 30 dignitaries as part of the 50th anniversary of the creation of ASEAN March 5.
- **HUSH FOUNDATION**

Ben Northey (Musical Director of Hush) has indicated he is interested in a project with FQ. The recordings are usually new material written for purpose.

Potential ideas:

 - Ngulmiya (First Nations singer)
 - Strike a Chord involvement
 - Involvement of a selection of past composer development participants
 - Zoe will have a meeting with Ben in the next month to discuss arrangements and timelines
- **NEW ZEALAND TOUR 2025**

Chamber Music NZ is unable to present a tour of FQ so we are looking into a tour which is financially self-sufficient through Wilma's contacts.

- **FUTURE FESTIVAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- We will alert festival directors to our 2025 programming plans with the intention of securing an engagement in a major festival in 2025.

2025 - 25TH BIRTHDAY PLANS

- A Tale of Two Composers commission
- NZ Tour
- Collaboration with guest artist
- Release of commemorative recording with highlights of 25 years

FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY

- Tony Birch potential collaboration
 - First Nations award winning author meeting with Zoe February 8 for an initial discussion.
 - An idea of combining a composer program with a specific project involving Tony writing poetry in exchange with composers. (Composers not necessarily First Nations.)
- Idea of having an Elder in Residence (inspired by Camerata in QLD) associated with project specific funding. Zoe will broach the subject with Julie Kantor at a patron function to seek her advice at the best way forward.
- Potential of working with Ngulmiya, a wonderful singer in a separate project (potentially Hush CD project).
- Idea of having a musical Acknowledgement of Country. Melbourne String Ensemble (a youth ensemble) has recently worked with a number of First Nations composers and now has a musical Acknowledgement of Country which they have said we are welcome to use, or we can create our own, or we can continue to do a verbal acknowledgement.
 - If it were to be musical, it would be very short (30-40")
 - There is a reluctance because of the musician sentiment towards the MSO acknowledgement although a number of patrons have commented on how much they appreciate Deborah Cheetham's long time living here
 - It could be very effective if we used Wurundjeri words as we did in Brenda Gifford's "Dissipate" with Dhurga words

2024 REGIONAL TOURING ACTIVITY UPDATE

- Castlemaine Gallery is keen to pursue a co-present arrangement with a pencilled date of March 16
- Horsham "Art Is" festival in June is a community festival working with the John Noble Itet program to boost the string community in Horsham. FQ will perform a side by side concert with Itet members and then an FQ concert.
- 2024 engagements include Macedon, Trentham, Northern Tasmania with anticipated concerts in Bendigo, Yarra Ranges, Albury, Avenel and Shepparton Art Museum.

THE FUTURE OF FQ DIGITAL

- We are moving ahead with removing the paywall from FQ Digital and having the content free to view. The handful of FQ Digital subscribers with time left on their 12 month subscription will be offered complimentary tickets to St John's Southgate or St John's Flinders for themselves or friends.

EDUCATION ACTIVITY

- See separate paper