

PERSONNEL UPDATE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELIZABETH SELLARS

- Fifth String members, Trust and Foundations, Government funders and other partners were notified late July.
- Public announcement (media release, e-news and socials) has received great support from the industry, including a mention in The Strad magazine.
- Liz will participate in FQ's 2024 creative development activity (in late 2023) before starting officially in January 2024.

PROGRAMMING AND COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

2023 concert programs update

- Program One a success with Liz.
- Northern Tassie tour a great success, looking to repeat in 2024.
- Maconchy recording was successful, and contact made with Maconchy's daughter, who was thrilled with the recording.
- Program Two a success with Natsuko with a great trip to Avenel and connections made with the local primary school.
- Brenda Gifford's new work Dissipate successfully premiered in Shepparton and Macedon, and well received.
- Julian Yu's arrangement of Goldberg variations (commissioned by Carrillo and Ziyin) performed in Shepparton and Macedon and was fairly well received. Mixed reaction to the length of the piece and the use of the erhu.

Mendelssohn hybrid production telling the story of Felix through the eyes of his sister Fanny; Richard Piper to be engaged as researcher (alongside Zoe) and dramaturg.

- Development with Richard has commenced.
- Presentation in 2024 as part of subscription season.
- Incidental music to be commissioned from Bryony Marks.

Dance collaboration has been put on hold for the moment after discussions with multiple choreographers and dance industry experts. The dance companies operate very differently to us so the logistics of dates could be untenable.

'No words needed', a musical letter writing project to celebrate our 25th birthday in 2025

- New work commissions by Melody Eötvös and Rishin Singh.
- Melody's commission to be supported by Julian Burnside.
- Rishin Singh's commission to be supported by FQ Syndicate #6.
- This project is the focus of a Creative Partnerships Australia Plus1 (matched funding) application, outcome expected in October.

Tony Birch potential collaboration

- First Nations award winning author will meet with Zoe and Liz with a view to a future collaboration. No agenda for this so far, just an initial discussion.

COMPOSERS

Commissioned composers:

- Maria Grenfell - commission delivered with premiere in 2023 subscription series concerts (October).
- Clare Strong - creative development has been successful, premiere in 2023 Itet concert (December).
We believe it will be suitable for mentoring work and use by regional ensembles.
- Natalie Nicolas - creative development successful with premiere to take place in house concert.
A new work commissioned by Andrew Domasevicius to commemorate his wife, Aida's 55th birthday, dependent on the work's suitability, it may be included in future concert seasons.
- Gordon Kerry - creative development scheduled early 2024 and premiere currently scheduled for 2024. Score has been delivered.
- Caroline Shaw - we had hoped to commission Caroline Shaw with international partners but Omega Ensemble has beaten us to it. We will be talking to our international friends for other ideas.
- Ollie Mustonen (Finland) is a composer we are eager to commission.
- Idea of commissioning international composers with a reciprocal Australian composer.

Ascend and Emerge composer programs:

- Score study complete with Emerge - hugely successful.
- In-person Emerge workshops with FQ will commence in the second half of 2023.
- Evaluation conducted at end of score study and will be conducted after the workshop phase and then after the performances.
- Premiere Emerge performances confirmed for 21 February 2024.
- Ascend call for submissions is now open .
- \$6,000 fee payable to successful Ascend applicants, with the option to work with up to 4 composers dependent on funding. Decision of how many composers to accept depends on notification of Ian Potter Foundation funding. Deadline for submissions has been extended to October 31.

EXTRA PROJECT ACTIVITY

- 2023 Monash residency - FQ mentored the string sections of the Monash orchestra in August 2023. Rachael Beesley, Lynette Rayner and Gabby Halloren filled in on this occasion.

EDUCATION ACTIVITY

- Zoe and Helen are working with Fiona to consolidate and evaluate education activity with an assessment of time spent and impact.
- With Helen on leave from the Education Coordinator role whilst overseas, Zoe will steer education until the end of the year.
- Strike a Chord (SAC) ensemble mentoring
 - 2022 winners of the FQ prize Piccolo Quartet from Sydney joined FQ for a side by side concert of Mendelssohn Octet in July (Montsalvat subs concert)
 - Jamie Miles from Eureka Quartet (2020 FQ prizewinners) replaced Piccolo violist who was unable to attend
 - No SAC competition in 2023, possibility of doing a side by side program with Eureka Quartet or similar in 2024 (2020 FQ SAC prize winners)
- John Noble's Itet program
 - Ensembles continuing in Bendigo, Shepparton, Mildura, Warragul/Traralgon, Bairnsdale, Western Suburbs
 - Mallee Quartet (Mildura) has had to withdraw from being regional ensemble in residence, FQ instead offered the position to the Castlemaine Chamber Players and has begun work with FQ.
 - Side by side concerts in May, July and November
 - Final concert December
 - Mentoring by Helen and Zoe as part of their Education Coordinator and Artistic Director roles
- Castlemaine Chamber Players are now FQ Regional String Quartet in Residence
- Secondary school residency program
 - No longer pursuing official residency positions in school as they are human resource heavy
 - Inviting secondary school students and families to MRC concerts (supported by funding from City of Melbourne)
 - Footscray High School - a day with Music students and recording students, very successful July
 - Zoe visit Ringwood Secondary school Sept 12 to help with string students
 - MacRobertson Girls High to participate in generating posters and backdrops for Shostakovich String Quartet No. 8 to be projected at MRC concerts. (funded by City of Melbourne)
 - Betty Amsden Foundation funding to support education activities unsuccessful
- Resonance String Orchestra
 - 2 mentee string quartets located in Castlemaine and Woodend
 - Regular coaching from Zoe
 - Testing of the sequential string quartet repertoire
- First Nations activity
 - Ensemble Dutala mentoring unlikely to continue due to relocation of program to Sydney
 - Possibility of having an Elder in residence as a paid position, funded by Annamila, to act as advisor where needed
 - Connection with Mark Rose (Deakin University) in Geelong and creating an FQ community there through mentoring

SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND CONCERTS 2024

- Decision to return to full programs in 2024 makes 2 concerts on one day at MRC impractical from the players' perspective. The cost of 2 days of venue hire (even half-days) at MRC is prohibitive, so it is more practical to return to one evening concert at MRC (a half-day hire) and seek out a new daytime metro concert venue to service that audience.
- We have decided to have weekday concerts at St Johns Southgate to fulfil the need for a daytime concert in the city. Venue hire is very affordable and the venue is highly accessible.
- A pilot “community concert” will be held at Docklands library Performance Space. This is aimed at attracting audiences wanting to try chamber music with short concerts, low cost, and bringing the City of Melbourne (CoM) community together (as part of CoM 2-year funding)
 - 30-40 minute concerts
 - Free for under 18s
 - \$10 tickets
 - Repertoire to comprise movements/elements of subscription series
 - 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
 - The concert will be 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
- Open rehearsals will continue as in previous years.
- Montsalvat and Flinders subscription series will continue unchanged.

2024 REGIONAL ACTIVITY

- Feasibility study of creating a weekend of activity at Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) is unlikely to occur in 2024.
- We are looking to create a series of partnerships with Regional Galleries (SAM, Castlemaine, Benalla and Wangaratta) in order to create more opportunities for high quality performances.

THE FUTURE OF FQ DIGITAL

- With fewer subscribers to FQ Digital in 2023, we feel the need to reassess the purpose of FQ Digital. It cannot be seen as a viable revenue stream based on the current numbers.
- FQ Digital is a great resource and high quality online content is of great value. Organisations are moving away from digital concerts, but regardless of the means of distribution, properly documenting the programs with high-quality video and audio is proving to have real value for us in accumulating quality online content for marketing, funding/partnership, education and industry development purposes.
- Human resources needed to continue to update FQ Digital Free
- Evaluation of FQ Digital will occur in September/October 2023 to make decisions on 2024 activity and consider the possibility of winding back FQ Digital and continuing with FQ Digital Free as part of the evaluation.

WILMA SURGERY

- Wilma has been battling a shoulder injury for a number of years and may undertake surgery at the end of the year. She is timing it to be ready for our first program next year but may need to be replaced for Itet work in December and Emerge concert in February. Wilma will make a decision in October.