

# **North Queensland Recorder Society Newsletter**

**October 2012**

## **Next Play Day**

The next play day will be on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October, St Joseph's School, Mundingburra, 2.00 – 4.30. Our leader for this session is Kate and her theme is rounds and their grown up cousins, fugues.

Please bring recorders, music stands, something to share for afternoon tea and a gold coin to assist with the expenses of the day.

## **Christmas Busking**

This year's charity busking is tentatively set for Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup>, subject to bookings. Watch the next newsletter. Meanwhile if anyone has any suitable Christmas music, please bring it to the October play day for consideration.

## **Plans for 2013 Workshop**

The committee has decided to change the timing and, to some extent, the format of next year's workshop. The main workshop will be held on the weekend of 2nd-4th August 2013.

This deliberately coincides with the last weekend of the Townsville Chamber Music Festival, the idea being to attract more visitors who might like to combine Townsville's winter sunshine, our recorder workshop and some or all of the Festival.

The committee also agreed that there should be less emphasis on the schools component next year. A viable option for schools is to hold a separate schools workshop earlier in the year, tailored to the needs of pupils. Pupils are welcome to attend the weekend workshop in August, but would be expected to commit themselves to the entire weekend and there would be no provision for enrolling in individual sessions.

Ruth Wilkinson of Melbourne has agreed to lead the workshop. She is an accomplished recorder player and trainer, popular with workshop participants and has already led two workshops in North Queensland.

Valerie Huston has made arrangements to host the entire workshop at St Joseph's School on the Strand. This is a great venue and would provide a good choice of accommodation for visitors.

Lynn Saunders has approached the Chamber Music Festival Committee via Townsville City Council, and the Committee has expressed support for our plans along the lines of a fringe festival.

## **The NQRS Website**

For many years, Malcolm Tattersall has looked after the NQRS website as an extension of his own. It is time for the Society to have its own domain and look after the website itself. Ian Montgomery has offered to do this, and the domain nqrs.org.au has recently been registered. Work on the website will start soon, so, as they say, watch this space.

## **Notes and Queries**

In his column in this issue, Malcolm Tattersall discusses a question that many parents and teachers need to consider.

## **Choices and futures**

“Mum, can I learn an instrument next year?” is a question which will be heard in many houses in the coming month, as primary schools invite their students to sign up for lessons in the coming year. But what are the choices and their implications, especially in terms of recorder?

1. Our state primary schools offer free group lessons in bowed string instruments (violin, viola, cello and bass) and all the concert band instruments (flute, clarinet, sax, trumpet, horn,

trombone, tuba, percussion, etc). Students can join the school's string orchestra or concert band when they are competent enough, and continue with lessons and a broader range of ensembles in high school. Some state schools also offer lessons in guitar, voice or other instruments, but usually at a cost. Recorder is often a component of the classroom music programme but not included in the instrumental programme, so very few students go far beyond *Hot Cross Buns*.

2. Our non-state schools offer all of the above, plus (usually) piano and sometimes recorder, but charge parents for all lessons.
3. Private teachers offer all of the above and more (mandolin, piano accordion, etc) and likewise charge for them.
4. Recorder is available to children a year or two before they are physically ready to take up most of the band/orchestral instruments and is an excellent foundation for learning other instruments.

We in the NQRS know that the recorder is a 'real instrument' but the school programmes (accidentally) marginalise it. In particular, recorder players in secondary schools can hardly ever participate in the highest levels of school music making, because they are welcome in neither the orchestra nor the concert band. (It's not just an anti-recorder bias: piano and guitar students have similar problems and need to find similar solutions.)

The common pathways, then, are to treat recorder merely as an introductory instrument, learning it for a year or two before dropping it in favour of an orchestral or band instrument; or to continue with recorder outside school while playing another instrument in school ensembles. In either case, woodwinds are the most natural choice, since everything the child has learned on recorder translates easily and quickly to flute, clarinet, sax, oboe or bassoon, but other paths are quite possible (just ask Wade, Chloe or Ingrid).

The third option is to continue strictly as a recorder player. However, this is quite isolating to a teenager, since she/he will have very few

peers for moral support and few performance opportunities compared to his/her classmates. Their parents will usually also be up for expensive private tuition rather than cheaper (in non-state schools) or free (in state schools) group tuition.

When we step back and ask why we want children (our students or our own children) to learn music, the answers are all about enjoyment, self-development and cultural enrichment. Those objectives have nothing to do with any particular instrument and if they can be realised more fully by playing instrument A or B rather than instrument C, then C is not a 'better' instrument in any important way, however much we may personally prefer it.

For all these reasons, I encourage my upper-primary recorder students to take up another instrument unless recorder truly is the only instrument they want to play. I am very happy if they continue with recorder as well, of course, but acknowledge that the other instrument is likely to bring them greater opportunities and pleasures in their high school years.

The down-side of encouraging the change is that I have very few advanced recorder students. That's a personal disappointment, of course, but it is outweighed by the belief that my loss is, in fact, their gain.

## **Solo Recorder Competition**

The Don Cowell Memorial Trust is holding a **Solo Recorder Competition in 2013**, with prizes including \$5000 for the winner of the Open section, and \$1000 for the winner of the Under 18 section. The competition is open to Australian residents who are students of music. The aim is to support talented students in the early stages of their career.

Further information is available from the web, by going to [vrg.org.au](http://vrg.org.au), and clicking on the "**DCMT**" button. You can download a set of PDF files for the competition from this site:

- the rules and timeline
- the list of set pieces and guidance from the adjudicators
- the entry form
- a poster advertising the competition

## **Orpheus Music Recorder Course 2013**

### The Course

The six day program will provide focused study in all aspects of recorder playing including technique, ensemble playing, special topics and recorder orchestra. Participants have the opportunity to choose their own course of study, with the tutors of each course offering a range of options drawn from their own areas of expertise.

### Tutors:

Kamala Bain (NEW ZEALAND), Andreas Bohlen (GERMANY), Amy Power (SWITZERLAND), Avery Gosfield (Italy/USA), Hans-Dieter Michatz (AUSTRALIA, NSW), Barbara Jerjen (AUSTRALIA, ACT), Robyn Mellor (AUSTRALIA, ACT), Joanne Arnott (AUSTRALIA, NSW), Alana Blackburn (AUSTRALIA, NSW), Benjamin Thorn (AUSTRALIA, NSW)

### Brochure

<http://orpheusmusic.com.au/PDFDownloads/OMRC13Brochure.pdf>

### Enrolment Form

<http://orpheusmusic.com.au/PDFDownloads/OMRC13EnrolmentForm.pdf>

### Music Order Form

<http://www.orpheusmusic.com.au/PDFDownloads/OMRC13MusicOrderForm>

## **Membership of North Queensland Recorder Society**

Are you a financial member? The membership year runs from the first of January and renewals of new memberships can be paid at the first play day.

Benefits of membership include

- Reduction in fees for workshops and other Society activities
- Access to the Society's library. (Members can receive a copy of the library catalogue as a CD or as an email attachment on request).
- Guaranteed receipt of newsletters.
- Opportunities to be involved in organising and deciding on Society activities

Membership fees: \$15 (Single), \$25 (Family), \$10 (student).

### **Contacts for the Society**

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