President's Report for 2015

Overview
In 2015, the Friends of the ANU School of Music have provided continuing support to the staff and students of the school. It is fair to say that the year has been disappointing in many respects. However, whenever the students perform in public and for assessment, we find our spirits lifted and our hopes renewed. This was reinforced often during the year with School undergraduate and graduate students being successful in many national and international festivals and competitions. A highlight was Tate Sheridan being the support act for Elton John’s 2015 Australian tour. The Friends helped Tate with a recording grant prior to his selection and he was the recipient of the 2014 Bernhard Neumann Prize.

The Friends Committee is optimistic about the future following the announcement that Professor Brian Schmidt will be Vice Chancellor of the ANU from 2016 through 2020 (with a possible 5 year renewal after that). Professor Schmidt’s public statements about the school, and his commitment to it, are encouraging. During early 2016, the Committee will meet with Professor Schmidt to discuss mechanisms to support excellence in music performance in the future.

During the year, the School lost much of the tempo and stability that had been evident under Professor Peter Tregear’s leadership. The loss of Professor Tregear as Head of School during the year was a significantly destabilizing event – with both staff and students expressing deep concerns about the future. The Friends expressed its concerns both publicly and privately to the ANU hierarchy. These concerns were acknowledged and mechanisms were put in place to ensure that the voice of the Friends is heard during the 2016 review of the school being conducted by Professor Schmidt. In the interim, Dr Royston Gustavson has acted as Head of School. His approach has been pro-active and open with a strong engagement with students and the Friends during the final months of 2015.

Support from the Diplomatic Community
Embassies have continued to support us by providing their venues for us to hold fund-raising concerts. In February, there was a beautiful concert to farewell the Ambassador for Hungary Mrs Anna Mária Sikó. She had been a staunch supporter of the School and, especially, our younger performers. It was wonderful to thank her and her husband, Robert Summerfield, for their unstinting support. The performers included Ciaran Edwards-McKeown (guitar), Mia Stanton, Donica Tran, Georgina Chan and Toby Aan (violin), Elizabeth Gibbs (voice), Chris Bottomley, Bernice Chua, Emily Buckley, Vivien Zhu and Mia Huang (piano), Miles Wrigley, Joshua
Healey and Dominic Hill (cello), Chloe Sinclair (viola), and Madison Hallworth (oboe). They performed both solo and ensemble pieces by Liszt, Paganini, Chopin, Bach, Mendelssohn, Bartok and others.

In June, we were also fortunate once again to have as our hosts the Ambassador for Austria Dr Helmut Böck and Mrs Barbara Böhm-Böck, for a diverse concert showcasing the real talent of the School's undergraduate and graduate students. The audience enjoyed an evening of fine music performed by some of the ANU School of Music's finest young musicians:

- **Jelena Mamic** (voice) and **Anne Ewing** (piano) performing Schubert, Wagner and Berg
- **Matthew Ventura** (bassoon) and **Anne Ewing** (piano) - movements from Hummel and Mozart concertos for bassoon
- **Courtney Hilton** (guitar) - movements from Bach's Suite in E minor
- **Helena Popovic** (violin) and **Anthony Smith** (piano) – Tchaikovsky and Bruch, and
- **Ellen Chan** (guitar), **Qichen Yan** (guitar), **Andrew Enright** (drums) – with some of their own compositions.

This was followed by supper provided by the Ambassador and his staff – an occasion that has come to have almost legendary status.

**Tax-deductible Public Fund offers its first scholarship**

During 2014, the Friends received government approval to establish a public fund (Friends of the School of Music – ANU Inc Public Fund) with tax-deductibility status. The Friends Committee decided to use the fund to establish an annual scholarship to support a newly enrolling student for up to four years in an approved performance studies course at the ANU School of Music. The scholarship is for $5,000 per year with continuing support dependent on the student achieving progress acceptable to the Head of School and continuing in a performance major.

The fund is overseen by a committee consisting of the Friends Treasurer, Secretary and three independent people – **Mr Lachlan McOmish**, **Mr Terry Dwyer** and **Prof. Peter McDonald**.

In early 2015, on the recommendation of the Acting Head of School, the Friends offered the first scholarship to **Roderick Bolt**.

Offering this scholarship each year will mean that, by 2018, there will be four students receiving scholarship support from the Friends subject to there being sufficient funds to allow this.

**Links to the Canberra Community**

The Friends have fostered partnership arrangements that reach out into the community, continuing scholarships for School of Music undergraduates who were selected for the Canberra Youth Orchestra. We also continued to help ArtSound's involvement in the Young Virtuoso competition by contributing to the running costs of hosting the National Awards in Canberra in 2015. This competition is organized by the Fine Music community radio networks around Australia.
The Friends were invited to participate in the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) Family Expo day on 14 March. The Friends of the School of Music and the Open School of Music’s participation in the 2015 DCO Family Expo was a no-cost opportunity to promote our work and raise awareness of the music programs available to the ACT Defence families who have been posted into the region. The day consisted of a static instrument display, some audio-visual material and some take-away bags with promotional material and contact information. The aim of the event was to attract new students to the open school and new members to the Friends.

We take the view that these partnering arrangements help promote the School and the ANU more widely by demonstrating the quality of the courses and the capabilities of the students.

**Fundraising Activities**
Apart from the concerts hosted by Embassies noted above, we held two fund raising concerts during the year.

**Dr Erin Helyard** once again hosted the Historical Instruments Concert – this year titled Vienna: “the land of the clavier!”: Piano Masterworks from 18th and 19th century Vienna. At a beautiful concert on 7 October, Erin delighted a large audience on the stage of Llewellyn Hall, with works of Mozart, Beethoven, F. X. Mozart, Brahms and Schubert, played on a mixture of original and replica instruments from the ANU’s Historical Keyboard Collection: the Graf replica, the Walter replica, and the 1862 Hornung and Moller square (donated by Bill and Anne Huffam). Not only were we treated to Erin’s virtuosity on these rarely played instruments, but he gave us a warm, engaging discussion before the playing of each piece of the particular qualities of the instrument which the composer would have had in mind while composing. It was a very special treat, followed by a tour of the historic instruments collection. Erin was ably assisted in the tuning of the instruments by **Chris Leslie**, who donated his piano tuning services. Many thanks are due to them both.

After the interval, **Christine Goode** made presentations of award certificates to our 2015 Performance Scholar, **Roderick Bolt**; to **Hamish Strathdee**, one of our Fankhauser Travelling Fellows; and to **Daniel Dwyer**, our Larko Scholar. Our Transition Award winner, **Stephanie Jones**, and our Bernard Neumann Memorial Prize winner, **Tate Sheridan**, were unable to attend, pursuing their post-ANU musical careers. Our other Fankhauser Travelling Fellow, **Jelena Mamic**, was already overseas.

The Friends fund-raising jazz concert, Mingus, Monk and More, delighted an enthusiastic audience on Thursday 27 August. We were treated to a wide-ranging repertoire of new compositions and standards. We had fresh, innovative and sophisticated compositions of **Johannes Luebbers**, played by his quintet featuring Johannes himself on piano, **Anthony Cotter** on trumpet/flugelhorn; **Andrej Thompson** on tenor sax; **Alec Hunter** on bass; and **Alec Brinsmead** on drums, with special guest **Amy Jenkins** on vocals. Then **Hugo Lee's quartet** (Hugo on alto sax, **Jack Schwenke** on electric bass, **Ben Forte** on guitar and **Alec Brinsmead** on drums) played lively melodic and rhythmic work from Hugo’s recent recordings and
the one he is completing with assistance from a Friends recording grant. Rosemarie Costi led her quartet (Rosemarie on vocals, Ben on guitar, Brendan Keller-Tuborg on bass, Alec on drums, with special guest, Eddie Bernusconi on trumpet) in some beautiful standards. In the second set, the ANU Jazz Collective paid tribute to Mingus, Monk and Joni Mitchell, in lovely standards and own compositions. The Collective featured a great deal of versatility in style, with all the musicians mentioned above, this time with Jack Schwenke playing trombone. Hugo, Alec and Rosemarie are among the students who have been work-shopping their music with Andrew Farriss, INXS songwriter, and HC Coombs Fellow for 2015.

The concerts raised more than $2,000 each – a great result.

Fankhauser Bequest
We reported in last year's President's Report that in late 2013 we were advised of a bequest from a former ANU staff member, Barry Fankhauser. We have retained this bequest at this stage rather than investing it in an ANU endowment as we have had some concerns over the way in which some aspects of these endowments were being managed, in particular the time taken by the university to pay student awardees. We have invested this bequest, and will use the interest and some of the principal to fund the Fankhauser Travelling Fellowship introduced in 2015. Some of the principal will be used if necessary in 2016 through 2017 to underwrite the scholarships established through the public fund. The first recipients of the Fankhauser Travelling Fellowship were Hamish Strathdee who used it to travel to the 58th Tokyo International Guitar Competition held in December and Jelena Mamic to participate in voice competitions in Europe.

Grants to Students
During 2015, we gave a number of grants to students who have been selected to perform in international competitions and receive master-class tuition from leading international teachers. The grants help defray some of the considerable costs students face in participating in such developmental activities.

1. Awards and Prizes funded by income from the Endowment for Excellence

The Bernhard Neumann prize for an outstanding 4th year student was awarded to Tate Sheridan who completed his studies in 2014. Tate is well known to the Friends, the university and wider community. He made his mark early in his time at the School, as an outstanding jazz pianist and composer, who has played at several fund-raising concerts for the Friends, at Government House, at Floriade, and at School of Music concerts of many kinds. He is a classically trained pianist, with a deep understanding of jazz and popular music traditions. Tate studied and played in New York for 3 months during 2015 and, as noted above, returned to Sydney to support Sir Elton John on his 2015 Australian tour.

The Friends’ Transition Award to help a recent graduate in the transition to a professional music career went to Stephanie Jones. Stephanie graduated in 2014 with First Class honours in classical guitar. Many of the Friends will also have seen her perform in large ensembles on alto and soprano saxophones and flute. Stephanie’s Transition Award projects include production of a CD of Spanish
guitar music from 16th to 20th centuries; an Australia-wide tour; participation in a number of international guitar festivals and competitions in Germany and Boston; lessons with experts; and auditioning for further education in Germany, assisted by German language lessons. She was successful in her application to the Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt in Weimar.

The Larko Award for 2015 was made to Daniel Dwyer, a first year keyboard student.

We also drew on the Endowment fund to support prizes for the Friends Ensemble Competition. The Friends established these prizes to promote ensemble playing in the tertiary student cohort in all musical genres taught at the ANU School of Music. There were two parallel ensemble competitions in 2015. The School ran them in two stages – a qualifying stage and a final - with the finalists performing at a public concert on 19 November in the Larry Sitsky Recital Room.

Prizes were awarded in two categories for each Competition:

1) The Friends Chamber Music Prize
   - First Place: $1,000 awarded to Andrew Blanch and Callum Henshaw (classical guitar)
   - People’s Choice $500 awarded to the Wattle Guitar Quartet (Jeffrey Cheah, Emma-Shay Gallenti-Guilfoyle, Cassandra Low, Alex Clark)

2) The Friends Jazz and Contemporary Music Prize (for jazz, contemporary, improvisatory, and popular music).
   - First Place: $1,000 awarded to the Hugo Lee Band (Hugo Lee, Ben Forte, Jack Schwenke, Alec Brinsmead)
   - People’s Choice: $500 also awarded to the Hugo Lee Band.

2. Grants funded from the Friends’ account (derived from membership fees, concert income and donations)

The Friends continued to support scholarships for students enrolled in the tertiary programs at the School to participate in the Canberra Youth Orchestra (CYO). The scholarships cover the fees for a year’s membership of the CYO. The chief criterion for selection is music performance merit, as determined at auditions for the CYO. Most of the scholarships are available to players of standard orchestral instruments, but there is also an opportunity for other instrumentalists (e.g. keyboard and guitar), as well as singers, to apply to be members of the orchestra for a semester and thus be eligible to compete in the CYO’s competition for a chance to play a concerto with the orchestra.

The Friends awarded scholarships to Matthew Ventura (bassoon) Chayla Ueckert-Smith (oboe), Gen Kinoshita (oboe) and Benjamin Drury (double bass) to participate in the Canberra Youth Orchestra program for 2015. These scholarships are a valuable way to strengthen the linkages between the School and other music organisations in Canberra.
The Committee agreed at the June meeting to provide a small grant to support the ANU Music Students Association (MSA) to hold a social event held on 21 July for students and supporters. Some Committee members joined in the event after our meeting that evening. The MSA has become very active in representing the needs of students to the ANU hierarchy. Through the leadership of Ellen Falconer (President) and her committee, the voice of the students at the school is being heard more clearly.

The Friends approved grants to the following students:

- **William Tu** (cello) for his travel to Europe in 2014 to undertake lessons with renowned cellists. A retrospective application was considered once William had returned to take up his studies at the School of Music in 2015
- **Camilla Pondel** (viola) to attend an international summer school in Moscow in August, where she had individual lessons with professors in the Moscow Conservatory, attended master classes, and rehearsals with the opportunity to perform at Myaskovski Hall. Camilla has a special interest in Russian repertoire.
- **Emily Buckley** (piano) to attend the Winterschool Masterclass, as part of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville. This included 8 days of professional development and tuition in a series of private and public masterclasses; several opportunities to perform in front of Festival audiences including participation in the ‘Advanced Concert’; and an open class with Winterschool Director, Michele Walsh.
- **Andrew Blanch** (PhD, classical guitar, researching tertiary classical guitar pedagogy) to complete a recording project of Spanish Guitar Music.
- **Andrej Thompson** (4th year honours, jazz saxophone) for a recording of his own compositions and those of Brendan Keller-Tuborg (3rd year, bass) inspired by the improvisational/compositional techniques of John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins and Igor Stravinsky.
- **Ellen Falconer** (4th year honours, piano) for a recording of Respighi piano music, following her interest in free keyboard transcriptions of ancient music.
- **Daniel Faber** (musicology) to attend and present at the Musicological Society of Australia's Annual Conference in Sydney
- **Hugo Lee** (3rd year saxophone and Physics) to assist with costs for an official university exchange he will be undertaking at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the first half of 2016.

3. **Young Performer activities funded from grants from the Eastlake Football Club**

We reported last year that the Eastlake Football Club had made a further grant to the Friends to promote outreach from the School of Music to ACT schools. Eastlake was pivotal in 2015 providing continuing support for the pre-tertiary Young Performers program convened by **Lindy Reksten**. The Friends thanks the Club for this generosity. The importance of this support was demonstrated at the concert at the Hungarian Embassy and many Young Performer concerts held at the School. The
number and performance standard of the pre-tertiary students participating in this program continues to grow and augurs well for future student intakes at the tertiary level provided the School can offer appropriate courses and teachers.

The Committee
The committee has worked very hard this year to build a sustainable program for current and future students in sometimes troubling circumstances. Several warrant special thanks: Christine Goode (the immediate past President who not only helped me enormously as President but was unstinting in helping with the School’s 50th Anniversary celebrations, concerts and volunteer coordination); Rosemary Greaves (Secretary) and Annie Oakey (Treasurer) for handling heavy workloads throughout the year; Robyn McKay (Vice-President) who, amongst other contributions, has produced the newsletter each month; Terry Neeman for liaison with the CYO and helping organise concerts; Marilyn Higgins (Vice President) in particular for setting up and administering our Facebook page, and Neil Montgomery for handling updates to the Friends’ section of the School’s website. Debbie Dwyer’s music qualifications were very valuable in helping to review the curriculum revision proposed by the Acting Head of School, Dr Royston Gustavson, to apply from 2016 onwards, Ann and Roger Smith, David Healey and Jo Frederiksen all carried out a variety of other concert coordination and volunteer tasks. In addition to committee members, many members of the Friends helped with both fundraising concerts and other support for the School in general. Many thanks to all for your generosity.

David McKeans (ex Auditor-General’s Office) was again appointed Auditor, and we are most grateful to him for his carrying out the role pro bono.

Assistance from the School
We receive invaluable help from the School, and would particularly like to thank Krystle Innes and Emma Creed (reception), who distributed the online newsletter, Emma Patterson (events coordinator), Donna Webster (School Manager), Harriet Torrens in student liaison, and Deanna Riddell and her team in venues.

Outlook for 2016
The Friends committee is looking forward to contributing to the future shape of the School through dialogue with the new Vice Chancellor of the ANU. We are confident that the voice of the Friends will be valued as part of this process.

Tony Henshaw, President
December 2015