

HIGH MUSIC RINGING

Jubilee of the Queensland Conservatorium

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presented to a Meeting of the Society on 27 May 1982.

Amongst the works of the poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy is a most expressive ode to the Music Makers which opens with these words:

We are the music makers,
 And we are the dreamers of dreams,
 Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
 And sitting by desolate streams,
 World-loosers and world forsakers,
 On whom the pale moon gleams:
 Yet we are the movers and shakers
 Of the world for ever, it seems.

Doubtless it was the beauties of music and its powerful influence upon the spirit and culture of our national life which in the first quarter of the present century promoted the thoughts and representations of musicians in Queensland upon the establishment of a Conservatorium of Music.

Over the period 1905 to 1921 there were expressions of thought by the former Musicians Association (which later became the Music Teachers Association) upon the desirability and indeed the necessity for a Conservatorium within our State. In this the association had the support of the Brisbane Music Council. Then in 1928 the late George Sampson, F.R.C.O., that grand pioneer of music in Queensland, mentioned the need for a conservatorium or school of music in the book, *Brisbane Music Week Programme*.

The real drive, however, commenced at the conclusion of the Second World War (1939-1942) when musicians embarked upon a campaign for the promotion of public interest and support and

Sir Douglas Fraser, as Deputy Public Service Commissioner, was on the first Advisory Council for the Conservatorium's establishment and was associated throughout with the initial planning.

Governmental action for the founding of such an institution. Prominent among these were Sydney May, Hugh Brandon and Gordon Spearitt of the University; Les Edye, Percy Brier, Dr. Dalley Scarlett, Ernest Llewellyn, Allen McCristal, Meyer Horwitz, and music critics Frederic Rogers and Tom Mead. Support was also given by visiting musicians Eugene Goossens, Professor Bernard Heinze, Dr. A.E. Floyd and Eileen Joyce. Public meetings were held, committees were formed, articles appeared within the daily press and there were deputations to Ministers of the Crown. The Music Teachers Association undertook fund-raising and was instrumental in realising a sum of approximately 2,000 pounds which the late Les Edye presented to the Premier in support of the Conservatorium's establishment.

The first positive step was taken in June 1948 when Les Edye submitted to the then Premier, the late E.M. Hanlon, suggestions by a sub-committee appointed for this purpose by a Brisbane publically convened and organised committee. The matter was then referred for advice to the Public Service Commissioner, who reported that while for some years there had been strong representations for the establishment of a Conservatorium, there was dissension among interested parties as to whether it should be under the direction and control of the University, or function as an institution apart from it.

The Commissioner therefore recommended that the matter be investigated by an expert committee (the personnel of which was suggested) with wide terms of reference. Upon consideration of this recommendation in August 1948 the Government decided to take no further action for the present. The matter was revived in May 1951 when the Governor-in-Council approved that Dr. L.D. Edwards (Director General of Education), E.K. Sholl (Queensland Manager, A.B.C.), Professor T.G. Jones (University of Queensland), Sydney L. May (Lecturer in Music, University of Queensland), and Leslie H. Edye (Teacher of Music), be appointed as a committee of inquiry. Cabinet accepted the principles of the recommendations of this committee, and in his election policy speech in May 1953 Premier Hanlon said a Conservatorium would be inaugurated.

PURCHASE OF BUILDING

It had been proposed by the committee that the Conservatorium should be housed in a building in Alice Street, Brisbane, occupied by the Engineering Department of the University. This proposition, however, proved impracticable. In September 1953 the Public Service Commissioner advised the Premier that the South Brisbane Town Hall building in Vulture Street seemed to offer the best

possibilities. This building had been converted into flats for the temporary housing of migrants recruited for professional employment with the Brisbane City Council, which shortly would be vacating the premises. On the recommendation of the Commissioner the building was purchased for 40,000 pounds. The Public Works Department undertook the alterations and refurnishing, and the following Committee was appointed to advise on organisation and staffing: H.G. Watkin (Director General of Education), D.W. Fraser (Deputy Public Service Commissioner), E.A. Payne (officer of the Education Department) and Sydney May and Leslie Edye, practising musicians.

Cabinet had already decided that the institution should be known as the School of Music, and under the control of the Department of Education. Having regard to this the committee reported upon the necessary administrative arrangements, studies to be undertaken, fees to be charged, staff requirements and conditions of employment and also furnishings and equipment within the building.

The Committee recommended that initially three full-time teachers be employed in the subjects of pianoforte, violin and singing. One of its recommendations was that under the suggested administrative arrangements immediate action should not be taken for the calling of applications for the position of Director, but that, subject to the school developing satisfactorily, consideration could then be given to calling for applications. So great was the outcry upon this recommendation that the advisory committee was at pains to point out that it did not at any time hold the view that the school should function without a director but that in view of the likely difficulty and delay in securing a suitable director the recommendation had been made to ensure the immediate establishment of the school with the three full-time teachers whose appointments had been suggested.

In view of dissensions which had arisen on a number of matters concerning establishment and staffing, the Premier of the day (Mr. V.C. Gair) convened on 20 April 1955, a meeting to obtain the views of competent and interested people to assist the Government in its desire to launch the project on a sound and business-like basis.

A conference with the Premier was attended by about twenty people with pronounced musical interests. It was to become of historical significance in translating into positive action a consensus of views on the matters in dispute. Foremost for consideration was the question of the name of the proposed institution. While some musicians favoured the term 'School of Music' because of nomenclatures in Britain, the majority felt that for the sake of uniformity with other Australian States the name 'Conservatorium' would be more desirable.

At a subsequent meeting of Cabinet there was accord with the decisions reached at the confrence, which included the following:

That the institution be known as The Queensland Conservatorium of Music;

That it be established under the control of the Minister for Public Instruction and be independent of the University of Queensland;

That an Advisory Council be appointed;

That steps be taken to obtain a director and that the position be advertised in Australia and other parts of the world;

That the selection of staff be left to the director following his appointment, but that applications for these be called with those for the position of director.

Immediate action was taken to implement this Cabinet decision. Positions of Director and the three teachers were advertised, and an advisory committee was appointed, with these as members: Messrs. H.G. Watkin, Chairman; D.W. Fraser, Deputy Chairman, and the Director of the Conservatorium (when appointed) as an ex officio member; Messrs. Les Edge, D.E. Felsman (Manager, A.B.C. Queensland), Sydney May, A.J. McKenniary, and T.J. Weedman. Mr E.A. Payne of the Education Department was the secretary of the committee, which was subsequently known as a Council.

The old South Brisbane Town Hall, with its well preserved red brick exterior and clock tower is an attractive landmark. Its interior finishes display the ornate architectural charm of the period of its construction — red cedar doors and fittings, decorated windows, and beautiful plaster work on walls and ceilings. A fine white marble stairway leads to the first floor of the building on which there was the former Council Chamber. This room naturally was converted for use as a concert hall and other rooms were adapted for use as studios, library, staff and students' common rooms, director's room and general office.

SELECTION OF DIRECTOR

Concurrently with the alterations, applications were being called for the position of Director. There were 51 applications, 45 from outside Australia. The overseas applications were reviewed in London by a committee convened by Dr. John F. Foster, secretary of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth. Australian and New Zealand applications were considered by the Conservatorium Advisory Council, but these did not measure up to

those received from certain overseas applicants. Following a general review of all applications, the Advisory Council recommended the appointment of Dr. William Lovelock, D.Mus(Lond.), F.R.C.O., F.T.C.L., L.M.A.M., A.R.C.M.

Dr. Lovelock was a most successful lecturer and examiner of Trinity College, London. His special fields of musical interests were piano, organ and composition. He had published many text books and exercises for students, and had held the office of Dean of the Faculty of Music in the University of London. As a Major in the Army in India he had demonstrated his capacity for administration. His appointment was highly acclaimed within local musical circles, and upon his arrival in Brisbane on 9 June 1956, he was enthusiastically greeted by a representative group of music lovers. In collaboration with the Advisory Council the director quickly got to work in establishing the Conservatorium.

Consideration of the applications for three full-time teachers resulted in the appointments of Messrs. Rex Hobcroft (Piano), Peter Martin (Singing) and Basil Jones (Violin). The calibre of these men can be judged by their subsequent careers — Rex Hobcroft after some service with the Conservatorium resigned to accept appointment with the University of Tasmania and subsequently became Director of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music; Peter Martin also left to take up appointment as Director of the Newcastle branch of the New South Wales Conservatorium but subsequently rejoined the Queensland Conservatorium as senior lecturer in Singing, in which position he achieved student success and rendered most valuable service until his untimely and regrettable death in July 1981; and Basil Jones later was to succeed Dr. Lovelock as Director of the Conservatorium.

In addition to the full-time teachers, part-time teachers were selected for the subjects of singing, pianoforte, organ, strings, woodwind and brass instruments mainly from high-rating local musicians.

The official opening was performed by the Premier, Mr. V.C. Gair, on 16 February, 1957 in the concert room of the Conservatorium. Initially tuition provided for single subject studies and diploma course studies. The diploma courses were arranged for performers (instrumental and singing), teachers (instrumental and singing) and composition. Two types of diplomas were awarded — an Associate Diploma covering three years of study and entitling the holder to use the letters A.Q.C.M., and a Licentiate Diploma covering a further year's study and entitling the use of the letters L.Q.C.M.

The Conservatorium opened with 110 students, but by the end of April this had increased to 200, 17 of whom were full-time, the

remainder being part-time, mainly of the subjects of piano and singing.

The year 1959 saw the expiry of the three-year term of Dr. Lovelock's appointment as Director and his refusal to accept re-appointment because of his dissatisfaction with the conditions offered him and dissatisfaction also with the Education Department's control of the Conservatorium. In an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 8 June 1959, Dr. Lovelock gave his views as to how the Conservatorium should be run. He stressed that a Conservatorium is not just another school but a highly individual institution. The Conservatorium should not be attached to a Government department but rather should be in the nature of a department itself. It is significant that the principles expressed by him in 1959 were implemented twelve years later when the Conservatorium was made a College of Advanced Education removed from the control of the Education Department.

Gratitude must be expressed to Dr. Lovelock for the way in which he, out of nothing, so effectively established the Conservatorium. We are also indebted to him as one who through his musical criticisms and his works and teaching has been instrumental in raising to a high plane musical performance and appreciation within the State.

In 1959 the term of the Advisory Council also expired. With the exception of Mr Sydney May (who had resigned), the previous members were re-appointed for a further term with four additional members — Messrs Hugh Brandon and Gordon Spearritt (University), Percy Brier (musician) and Allen McCristal (A.B.C.)

High Standards Won

An early task for this Council was the filling of the position vacated by Dr Lovelock. More than 20 applications had been received from Australia, Britain, Canada, America, Italy, Austria, Finland and New Zealand. On the recommendation of the Council, Mr Basil Jones, teacher of violin, who had been acting as Director for 12 months, was appointed as the new Director in June 1960. Prior to his appointment to the Queensland Conservatorium, Mr Jones was for a time Chief Study Teacher in violin at the Melbourne University Conservatorium. He had studied under the famous Adolph Busch and had toured Europe with The Busch Chamber Players.

The period 1960 to 1971 was to be one of influence in the Conservatorium's future destiny. Student enrolments increased yearly and there was growing support from both the public and private sectors of the community. Scholarships which were available to students included:

Four Queensland Government Scholarships (one each for keyboard, strings, singing and wind instruments); Queensland Foundation Scholarship (awarded every fourth year for instruments or voice); and Commonwealth Scholarships — four year (awarded on results of Senior Public Examination). In addition there were many bursaries and prizes generously donated by Queensland music teachers and music lovers. These were presented each year at Diploma night.

Concerts continued to be given by students, and with the formation of an Opera Workshop, there were public performances of one-act operas and excerpts from major operas. On the academic side a new diploma course was introduced. External examiners at the annual examinations for music diplomas gave praise to the high standards reached by students and the teaching at the Conservatorium, which in their opinion ranked among the best in Australia. Students achieved successes in the Concerto and Vocal competitions conducted by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. At the auditions conducted under the auspices of the A.B.C. for the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York, the twelve candidates chosen from all over Australia included two Queenslanders — Donald Shanks and Henry Howell. Donald Shanks was one of the three Australian singers chosen for the grand final of this competition.

Over the years there had been changes in the personnel of the Advisory Council through deaths, persons ceasing their membership and others being appointed. Upon the death of Dr H.G. Watkin, Mr G.D.K. Murphy (Director General of Education) was appointed chairman and new members included Professor Noel Nixon (University of Queensland), Messrs. Charles Hall (lecturer in music, Teachers College) and John Villaume (musician and music critic).

In 1971 the Conservatorium was established as a College of Advanced Education and removed from the administrative control of the Department of Education. Historically the Colleges of Advanced Education in Queensland arose from recommendations of committees charged with studying the inadequacies of the system of tertiary education provided by universities and technical colleges. Of particular influence were the recommendations made in 1965 by what is known as the Martin Committee. The basic principle of 'advanced education' is that it be vocationally orientated and whilst being tertiary in character should be flexible in approaches to entry requirements, teaching methods, modes of study and the design of courses.

Legislative provision for Advanced Education in Queensland was included in the Education Act under which there were established a Board of Advanced Education and a College Council (whose

membership should include staff and student representatives) for each established college.

The first Council of the Conservatorium had for its membership:

Sir Douglas Fraser, I.S.O. — Chairman; Owen M. Fletcher — Deputy Chairman; Basil Jones, F.I.A.I., ex officio; K.R. Siddell, B.Mus., Dip.Ed.(Hons.); G.J. Hosking, B.Com., F.C.A.; D.E. Penman, B.A.; G.D. Spearritt, B.Mus., B.A., A.Mus.; W.J. Kerrison, F.R.A.I.A.; R. Wells, B.A., L.T.C.L., A.Mus.A.; Janet Delpratt, B.Sc., M.Dip.Mus., and Peter Martin, staff representatives; Jacquelyn Con and Margaret O'Leary, student representatives. Noel A. Milliken, B.Com., A.A.U.Q., A.A.S.A., Registrar, was also secretary to the Council.

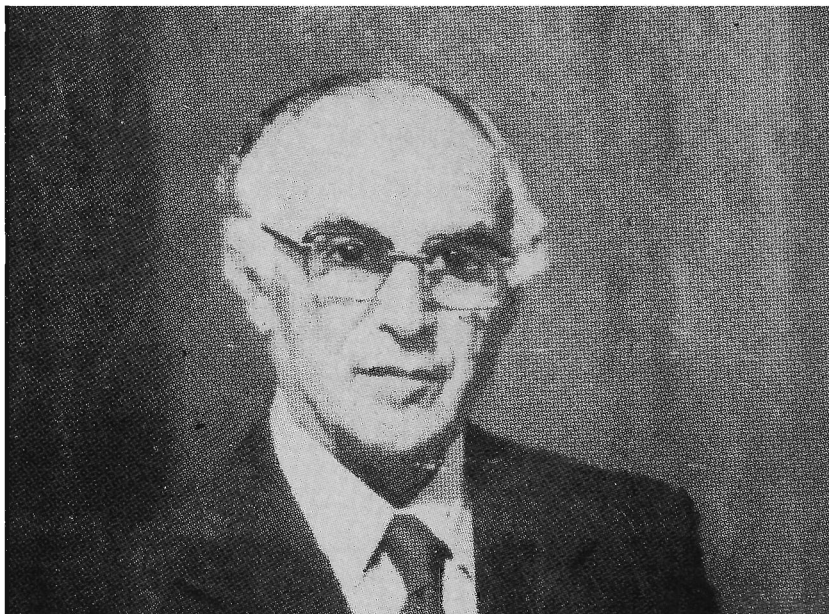
Subsequent appointees to fill vacancies included Patrick Thomas, John Noble, Cecil Abotomey as 'appointed' members, Max Olding as staff representative and David McNiven, Lesley Young, Mark Hooper, Adele Nisbet and Noel Brown as student representatives.

In its functioning the Council was constrained to work within the limits of its financial budget and the funds made available for the Conservatorium's operations. In the first instance the financing of recurrent expenditure was shared by the Commonwealth and State Governments according to an agreed formula, and capital costs were shared equally by those governments. After 1 January 1974, however, the Commonwealth Government assumed full responsibility for both recurrent and capital financing. This change of financial responsibility naturally had important implications in relation to the Conservatorium's operations, seeing that the nature and extent of these could be governed by Commonwealth authorities through financial control.

In this financial control the Commonwealth authorities were influenced by the local submissions and recommendations of the Queensland Board of Advanced Education. The Conservatorium was fortunate that this board, under the chairmanship of Mr W. Wood and later Dr J. Allen, was appreciative of the peculiar functioning of the Conservatorium and its differences from other colleges in its philosophy, operations, methods of teaching, accommodation and equipment. Particularly appreciated was the determination of the Board to establish the Conservatorium as a quality institution and a centre of excellence in music performance and education.

In 1974 'degree' accreditation was given to the Conservatorium existing fellowship diploma courses in Music and School Music and the Queensland Conservatorium became the first College of Advanced Education in Australia to offer a degree course. Following the accreditation of degrees in 1974, seven students graduated as

Bachelors of Arts in Music and twelve as Bachelors of Arts in School Music. There were then in attendance at the Conservatorium 154 tertiary students (92 full-time and 62 part-time) and 303 other part-time students. Full-time lecturers numbered 10 and there were 40 part-time teachers.



Mr. Basil Jones, Director of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1959-1980.

New Home is Built

Consideration was being given to the provision of a new building. The old South Brisbane Town Hall building was bursting at the seams. The caretaker's cottage had to be taken over for teaching purposes, its various rooms being converted to studios. The library (in which there was a valuable collection of material) was housed in the kitchen with the kitchen stove and sink 'in situ'. A site for a new building was selected at Gardens Point, lower George Street, bounded by the Q.I.T. campus and the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. The new Conservatorium comprised two major elements — a five-storey teaching wing and an auditorium-theatre section. The teaching wing provides accommodation for the Administration, a central library, studios and teaching rooms for the teaching of piano, singing, violin (and other instrument) subjects, together with rooms for tutorials and staff and student common rooms. The Auditorium (equipped with seating for 400) has a stage section which includes an orchestral

pit, stage lighting, fly loft, dressing and storage rooms. Its design serves as a multi-purpose education area equipped for opera, drama, film projection, lectures and concert presentations.

The building was officially opened on 9 August 1975 by the Governor of Queensland, the late Sir Colin Hannah. With its opening a new spirit permeated the Conservatorium. The excellent facilities resulted in teaching and performance reaching new heights and enabled the development of a Conservatorium Orchestra and Choir; other vocal and instrumental groups; an opera school; electronic music and a recording studio. In the auditorium were held opera productions, concerts, recitals, seminars and master classes, given by the staff and students and by visiting artists. Many of these were available to the public. So freely were these performances given that the Conservatorium became a focal point in the musical life of the city.

After years of investigation and consultation with staff and students the Council adopted the design of a Conservatorium symbol. The adopted device represents the Albert lyrebird, which is a native of south-east Queensland and symbolises music in its many and varied forms. The additional symbolism of the five line staff has been incorporated in the bird's tail. The symbol is being used on certificates of academic awards and on letter-heads, concert programmes and advertisements, as well as in less formal ways.

In June 1979, because of Governmental institution of a policy of age retirements, a number of members of the Conservatorium Council, including the Chairman (Sir Douglas Fraser) relinquished office. Mr Owen Fletcher, Deputy Chairman, became Chairman and Mr Hugh Cornish succeeded him as Deputy Chairman. New members were Mrs Ann Carroll and Messrs P.W. Dent and K.T. Gilbert. The new staff representatives were senior lecturers Alan Lane and the late Peter Martin. Miss Julie Owens joined Mrs Adele Nisbet as student representatives.

The Conservatorium Council is fortunate in having as its Chairman Mr Fletcher, a retired solicitor who as Deputy Chairman had given his time and skills unstintingly. On the completion of the new Conservatorium building, a substantial donation from Mr and Mrs Fletcher made possible the fine mural in the foyer of the building. In 1980 Mr and Mrs Fletcher made a further gift of \$25,000 to enable the establishment of an exciting 'Master Teacher' project designed to bring visiting artists into 'residence' at the Conservatorium for appropriate periods, depending upon the availability of the visitor.

Mr Basil Jones retired as Director in 1980. At an official retirement ceremony, the Council gratefully acknowledged his long and distinguished service. In recognition of this, the auditorium was named 'The Basil Jones Theatre', and at the 1981 Graduation

Ceremony Mr Jones was invested with the award of Honorary Fellow of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music.

Following world-wide advertising, Dr Roy Wales, D.Mus.A., M.A., F.R.S.A., L.G.S.M., L.T.C.L., of the United Kingdom was selected from a field of 67 applicants to succeed Mr Jones. Dr Wales came to the Conservatorium with a high reputation as a conductor of orchestras and choirs. He quickly exhibited these attributes in subsequent performances by students. The Conservatorium went 'on show' at a Gala Concert presented to a near capacity house in the City Hall, Brisbane on 11 September, 1981. This was the initial step in establishing a post-graduate scholarship fund in memory of the late Senior Lecturer in Singing, Peter Martin. Additionally an object of the concert was to introduce the general public to the various performing ensembles and varying styles and types of music with which Conservatorium students were involved.

Threat Resisted

In the twenty-fifth year of its operations the Conservatorium received a threat which raised the ire of all music lovers. Following on the recommendations of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee (colloquially and perhaps appropriately dubbed 'The Razor Gang') the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Committee asked the State Government to consider amalgamation of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with a larger institution. This would have meant that the Conservatorium in its present form would be abolished and become a department of a larger institution with differing and competing objectives. Great was the public outcry when this recommendation was known. It was condemned by all sections of the community (not only musicians), by articles and editorials in the news media and by representations to politicians. As a result the proposal was not pursued, and it is to be hoped will not again be raised.

The Conservatorium is a unique organisation with a unique position in Queensland in relation to its purposes, problems, and modes of operation. Its very nature requires its separate individuality away from other institutions. This philosophy is admirably expressed in a verse of O'Shaughnessy's *Ode to the Music Makers* —

'But we with our dreaming and singing
Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
The Glory about us clinging
Of the Glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing
O man! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing
A little apart from ye.'

Looking back over the past twenty-five years, the Conservatorium can indeed be proud of its influence and achievements. In this period it has rendered services to 2,517 students (1,141 full-time and 1,376 part-time). Of these, 383 have received certificates, 103 diplomas, and since 1974 Arts degrees have been awarded to 223 students and Graduate diplomas to 29 students.

It can be said that the Conservatorium has achieved a reputation which is not surpassed by any other musical Conservatorium in Australia. Its graduates have taken their places in most State and National music performing institutions, including the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and other A.B.C. Orchestras, the Queensland Theatre Orchestra and local opera companies. More importantly, many have entered the education services, imparting not only musical techniques but also the love and appreciation of music to the younger generation.

In its pursuit of excellence in music performance its students are taking major prizes and winning competitive awards against students in the older music schools and Conservatoriums in other States. In the 1981 A.B.C. Vocal and Instrumental Competitions, all five State finalists were Conservatorium students, one of whom was a Commonwealth finalist.

These records brilliantly reflect the high qualification, inspiration, and dedication of the Conservatorium's directors and teaching staff who, in addition, have given freely of their artistic talents in community cultural activities outside the Conservatorium. And so upon the Silver Jubilee of the Conservatorium's establishment, its staff and students (past and present) can look back with pride and satisfaction upon its achievements. These must surely be a fulfilment of the dreams and aspirations of those early protagonists who championed the cause of its establishment.