



Upper Hunter
Conservatorium
of Music

2020
Annual
Report





ABOUT UPPER HUNTER CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

Mission

To cultivate performing arts in the Upper Hunter through inclusive and accessible education and performance programs in a wide variety of genres.

Vision

Enriching lives through performing arts

Goals

- to provide quality music and drama tuition to residents of the Upper Hunter;
- to foster music as a form of social interaction, expression and creativity; and
- to enhance the cultural life of the local community.



INTRODUCTION

During the most difficult of times, the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music delivered a diverse range of music education and performance experiences throughout the pandemically affected 2020 year. As a member of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums, Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music receives funding from the NSW Department of Education via the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program. In 2020, funding contributed to the delivery of music education programs, concerts, workshops and masterclasses as well as administrative management of the conservatorium. This funding also assisted with costs associated with the Muswellbrook campus other teaching centers, physical resources including sheet music, instrument acquisition and instrument maintenance. This funding is vital to the work of the conservatorium, and Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music is grateful not only for the funding from the Department of Education, but also for the ongoing positive relationship with the Department of Education as we work together to bring music education to the Upper Hunter region.



PRESIDENTS REPORT

2020 was indeed a year like no other!

In the life of our Conservatorium, it is unlikely that there has been a year as challenging and yet at the same time equally rewarding.

When the Coronavirus pandemic took hold across the world, we here in the Upper Hunter were also deeply affected. In only a few short days decisions needed to be made about how, or even, if we could continue to provide services for our students.

I was incredibly impressed by the way that all of the people who make up our Conservatorium family responded to what were at times extraordinary demands. When the decision was taken to suspend face to face teaching and other interaction our teachers did a fantastic job of adapting to the online environment. Our students and their families showed commitment and patience as they continued to engage with their lessons. Our administration and support staff, time and again went over and above that which would have normally been expected of them. All in all, 2020 instead of being a potential disaster became the year of adaptability, innovation and resilience.



Among all of this we were anticipating a change of Director as Dr Wendy Brooks had, well before we had even heard of COVID-19 indicated her intention to move on from the role. We are grateful that Wendy was able to extend her tenure and guide us through the first and perhaps the most challenging part of the work required to make us COVID safe and ready. I am deeply grateful for her hard work, commitment and grace under pressure during this time. Wendy's love of music and her passion for quality music education has been an inspiration to many. We have been fortunate to have Wendy in the role of Director and wish her and Peter well in their next endeavours.

In welcoming Mr Andrew French-Northam to the role of Director our Conservatorium will once again benefit from a new style and focus in the years ahead. Andrew brings with him an enthusiasm which is infectious. He also brings excellent experience in music education and we will benefit from his deep commitment to living out his love of music education and performance in a regional setting. We welcome Andrew and Sue to our community.

On reflection the year that has been, has indeed been a year of challenge and change. It was also a year of opportunity. What lies ahead for us now is a time of consolidation as Andrew grows into the significant leadership role of Director.

As I retire from the position of President, I would like to thank all of the people I have come to know, learn from, and respect in my time with the Upper Hunter Conservatorium. From our life members, our Management Committee, Directors, Staff, Teachers, Students and their families I have received many blessings and it has been a privilege to work with you.

I am confident that in this next epoch our Conservatorium will continue to excel as a provider of quality music education and performance in the Upper Hunter region. I wish you all well and commend this Annual Report to you.
With all good wishes.

The Reverend Scott Dulley
President





DIRECTORS REPORT

Reflecting on an extraordinary and uniquely challenging year, filled with personal and societal change, individual restrictions, and global concerns, I am amazed by the UHCM communities continuing commitment to enhancing the cultural life of the Upper Hunter. With the pandemic in full flight, unknowns the norm, academic and management staff adapted and innovated to deliver quality arts education. Individual lessons and meetings were zoomed, instrumental groups rehearsed remotely, choirs and groups suffered the most. The power of group performance and music fraternity on hold. Schools closed and physically remote students and teachers. A year of challenge never experienced by most alive on the third rock from the sun.

With the pandemic apparently abated, with continued community support and encouragement, we renew the challenge of attaining UHCM targets and goals so aptly and concisely expressed, to provide quality performing arts tuition and experiences to residents of the Upper Hunter, to foster music as a form of social interaction, expression, and creativity; to enhance and develop the cultural life of the local community. I am eager to present new initiatives and programs, enhance existing endeavours, excited for the future of performing arts in the Upper Hunter.

My eminent predecessor as Director, Dr. Wendy Brooks, is unerringly supportive, informative and encouraging, I could not wish for a more valuable and convivial colleague. My arrival to the Upper Hunter has been an extraordinary journey of new friends and colleagues quickly made, warm open welcoming and heartfelt encouragements. A multitude of thanks for the UHCM community.

I acknowledge and deeply thank the talented UHCM staff, academic, administrative and governance for their commitment to inspiring excellence in performance and education. I am deeply proud of the achievements of the UHCM and foresee a great future of performing arts in the Upper Hunter.

With music in our hearts and confidence in community we strive forwards, with new endeavours, with informative past experiences, with community collegiality.

Yours in Music

Andrew French-Northam
Director





FINANCIAL SITUATION

The 2020 Auditor's Report and Financial Report for Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music Inc will be found at the end of this document. The association reported a large operating profit of \$507,456. This compares favourably to previous results where a deficit of \$56,666 (six-month period Jul-Dec 2019) and profit of \$2,554 (2018-2019) were noted.

The strong result was due largely to additional government funding received in relation to the government's economic response to Covid-19 including the JobKeeper payment scheme and ATO Cash Boost which contributed an additional \$562,450 in combined funding.

Student income from lesson fees declined 11% compared to the annualised Jul-Dec 2019 which was a commendable outcome considering the challenges that Covid-19 introduced including the cancellation of face-to-face tuition and move to online lesson delivery once lessons recommenced. Venue hire and income from concerts and functions were also understandably impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

Whilst the conservatorium is yet to finalise a new lease agreement with Muswellbrook Shire Council, the Council agreed to suspend rental payments commencing October 2020 which has seen a reduction in our combined annual rent to \$44,077 across all campuses. If ongoing this rent reduction will assist the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music in meeting the requirements for delivery of programs as outlined in the funding agreement with the Department of Education.

Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music has continued to outsource management accounting to Davies, Thompson and Wright. As we move forward with new Committee members and a revised Strategic Plan, the evaluation and forward planning of financial management will be prioritised, and new opportunities for increasing revenue will be sought.

The association is committed to maintaining fiscal discipline in order to continue financial growth and to maintain reserve ratios and will continue to monitor this via monthly reporting and review.

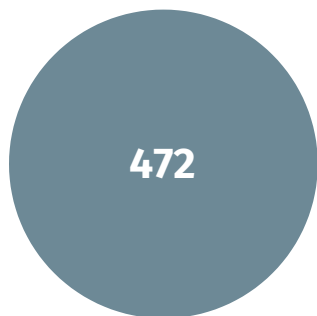
Matt Pereira

Treasurer

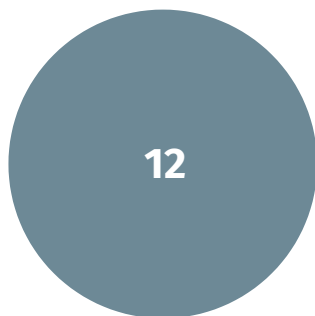


2020 AT A GLANCE

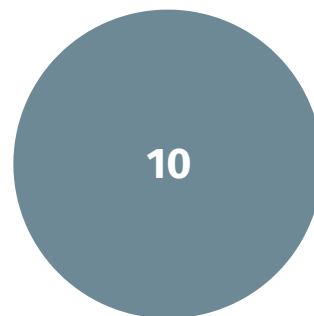
**INDIVIDUAL
STUDENTS**



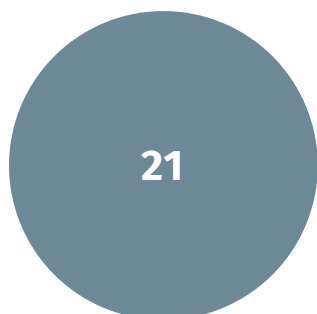
SCHOOLS



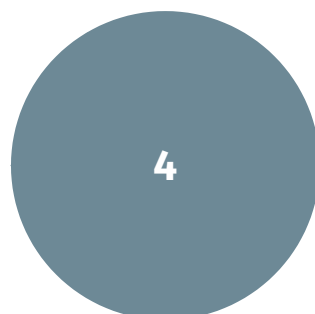
ENSEMBLES



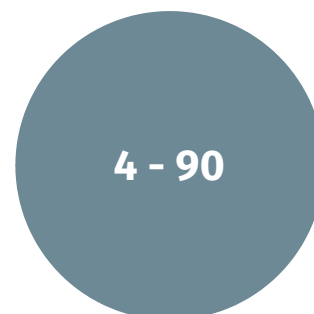
ACADEMIC STAFF



**ADMINISTRATION
STAFF**



**STUDENT AGE
RANGE**



KEY CHALLENGES:

"As the pandemic restrictions tightened and face-to-face became impossible"

"Performance was curtailed from the declaration of the national pandemic response"



EDUCATION

In 2020, students from early childhood to senior citizens and across all stages of learning participated in a wide range of music education programs through Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music. Programs were run in our Muswellbrook and Singleton studios, as well as a diversity of other venues, with Conservatorium teachers travelling to government and non-government schools across the wider Upper Hunter region.

As the pandemic restrictions tightened and face-to-face became impossible, tuition by video-conferencing (VC) became the norm, the essence of performing arts education digitally transformed. VC vocal, instrumental and performances challenged new ways of learning, sharing and performing. The whole community, teachers, staff, students adapted rapidly to a new challenging world.

UHCM staff and students excelled in Exam results. Although video exams were new to most, we deservedly gained a large cohort of grade A results. An excellent reflection of the professionalism, commitment, and dedication of UHCM staff and students. With the expert guidance and encouragement for staff, our UHCM students achieved great examination results. All of Jennifer Kershaw's violin students achieved grade A results, Kate Flannery's Music Theatre students achieved A and B+ gradings.

Performance was curtailed from the declaration of the national pandemic response during March, performances postponed, teaching became remote delivery, rehearsals cancelled.

As national, state and local control of COVID took effect and achieved some success in controlling the outbreak, restrictions slowly eased, and some normalcy returned at the end of the year with strictly controlled studio concerts a celebration of student and teacher resilience.

Scholarships are a signpost of the future of performing arts in our community. UHCM 2020 scholarship auditions were again very competitive, successful awardees gained recognition for many hours of dedication, commitment and perseverance.





2020 SCHOLARSHIPS

Bengalla Peter Riddy Memorial Scholarship	Holly McDonald
UHSC Barry Rose Memorial Scholarship	Bridie O'Neil
Liddell Coal Scholarship	Isaac Hill
Liddell Coal Scholarship	Jude Samson
Liddell Coal Scholarship	Thomas Parmeter
Liddell Coal Scholarship	John Butt
Singleton Shire Council Scholarship	Charlotte Davey
Singleton Shire Council Scholarship	Hans Java
Singleton Shire Council Scholarship	Finn Murphy
Wear Parts Early Stage Learner Scholarship	Patrick Burke
Wear Parts Early Stage Learner Scholarship	Truman Butt
Wear Parts Early Stage Learner Scholarship	Ryan Panis
Wear Parts Services Stage Learner Scholarship	Riley Jeans
UHCM Adult Encouragement Award	Hayley Hungerford
UHCM Adult Scholarship	Dayna Hynes
UHCM Scholarship	Jarvis Flannagan
UHCM Scholarship	Colby Sutherland
UHCM Scholarship	Chuan Chuan
UHCM Scholarship	Jarvis Flannagan
MSC Band Scholarship	Bella-Rose Partridge



PARTNERSHIPS + STAKEHOLDERS

There are many valuable and varied partnerships fostered by UHCM within our community that deserve recognition. Scholarships value a student's commitment and achievement, dedication and perseverance. They are graciously made possible by Bengalla, Lidell, Wearparts, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter councils. Their contribution makes a significant and valuable contribution to the future of performing arts.

The continued and vital Department of Education Regional Conservatorium grants program remains absolutely core the existence of UHCM and the wider regional conservatorium network of seventeen centres for performing arts excellence and education. Without the extraordinary commitment and professionalism of the Department's Regional Conservatorium team, our Conservatorium and the regional Conservatoria network would cease to exist. UHCM is a member of the Association of NSW Regional Conservatoriums. This association continues its valuable peak body representational and governance on our behalf. The ANSWRC conferences were delivered by video-conference and supplied valuable opportunity for the regional conservatoria to gather information, inform decisions and foster information and knowledge.

The Muswellbrook Shire Council is a most valuable continuing partnership. UHCM enjoys a great relationship with the MSC contributing the artistic growth and development of the community. The Campbell's corner complex of teaching studios, performance spaces and administrative offices is the envy of many Regional Conservatorium's and we are grateful for the forward vision of the council for our marvellous premises.

This year, the fantastic relationship UHCM has with visiting arts was curtailed. The new year brings new opportunity with our partners such as Musica Viva, various Youth orchestras, SSO, Regional Art galleries, Muswellbrook Amateur Theatrical Society, Kia-Ora music camp and many individual content originators to deliver great performance and education experiences in the Upper Hunter.





Schools

It was a challenging year for all our school partners of interrupted delivery, personal disconnection, digital connection, and an extended period of intense lockdown and remoteness. Individual, small group and ensemble programs were reshaped, reimagined. The emotional, interpersonal and neurological benefits of music education and performance dimmed.

During exhaustive and challenging physical and emotional conditions, we continued our connections and resumed face-to-face delivery later in the year in many modified patterns with Aberdeen Public, Broke Public, Denman Public, Merriwa Central, Muswellbrook South Public, Nulkaba Public, Pacific Brook Christian, Rosary Park Catholic, Scone Grammar, Scone High School, Scone Public, St Joseph's Merriwa, St Mary's Scone.

Profile

Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music's digital presence provided important channels of publicity, communication and profile-raising during the difficult social restrictions. The Facebook page has over 1390 followers and is, therefore, an essential part of the conservatorium's profile. During the pandemic, performance was rehearsed, produced, and presented in digital channels.



Human Resources

It was a year of great global, national, and local change and challenge, opportunity and reinvention, and so it was for UHCM human resources.

We gained many exciting new possibilities, skills, and abilities, with new academic staff. The arrival of Elliot Styche brought contemporary vocal technique and science of the highest order to the Upper Hunter. Isaac Smith commenced his first year with UHCM and blossomed as a teacher of diverse instruments and skills. Andrew French-Northam commenced as director with new ideas for future possibilities, existing passion for arts education and performance in the regions, and a commitment to excellence.

Vocalist Nathan Adamthwaite left to pursue further academic studies leading to masters and doctorate qualifications in music. Graeme McCutcheon and Lisandra Bailey left UHCM for a Full-time school teaching positions in the Hunter Valley.

Of course, the departure of Dr. Wendy Brooks for the Young school of Music was an extraordinary time of momentous change for the UHCM. Wendy stayed as the Director past her desired departure to guide the UHCM through the challenging emergence of COVID. Her dedication to the task of securing the future deserves the highest commendation.

UHCM academic and administrative staff developed advancing skills in ZOOM, and a briefing on 2021 and beyond planning at a staff development day in October. We fully implemented and utilised the specialty software Music Monitor. Academic and administrative staff gained useful skills and experience with this specialty software solution for music schools.

Physical Resources

A Create NSW Creative Kids Digital Small Business grant allowed UHCM to acquire several laptop computers greatly assisting in the remote delivery of music education during the lockdown, recovery and beyond.



Governance

The UHCM committee acquired new members with complimentary diverse sets of skills and abilities. Max Morris joined with large experiences in business management and music industry. Long term contributor Murray Kershaw retired from the board but continues his appreciated active musical participation within UHCM.

The UHCM committee gained valuable insights, skills, and experience at the ANSWRC conference with a session on Governance delivered by industry expert Lucas Ryan.



UHCM 2020 FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Operating Profit	\$507,456
Government assistance	\$562,450
Student income	-11%

POINTS OF INTEREST

Modified Lease Agreement	-\$44,077
Expenses	-3.5%
Equity	+3X

