

Report for the Composers Association of New Zealand to present at the ACL Festival in Taipei, November 2011: looking back over the period since April 2009.

written by Glenda Keam, President of CANZ

The Composers Association of New Zealand (CANZ) continues to work actively for composers in New Zealand, with a voluntary committee (seven members) who meet twice per year, and a core group of active members who maintain the website, produce a bi-monthly newsletter and a yearbook, hold an annual composers workshop, advocate for NZ music where this is called for, and provide other occasional professional development opportunities.

Since the last full ACL festival held in Tongyeong in 2009, CANZ continued its work that year developing a five-year strategic plan. The principal reason for this was that we felt it was time to ask ourselves questions about whether our priorities and activities are relevant for our members and our aims. Now more than ever before, what it means to be a composer is changing incredibly fast, for example the ways in which music is disseminated has multiplied, the ability to make exact digital copies has intensified copyright challenges, and the ability to make one's own computer-typeset scores and parts has broken the old model involving a working relationship between composer, publisher and copyist.

Having developed the strategic plan, CANZ decided to proceed cautiously and mindfully, bearing in mind that significant changes were being brought about in the funding structures of Creative NZ (our Arts Council) and their relationship with most of the large arts-related organisations that Creative NZ supports. CANZ is strongly committed to many of our regular activities and the role we have been playing as an integral part of New Zealand's contemporary music scene, so the task is to continue identifying those areas where we can do better, where we can achieve more while being more efficient and thus saving some of our energies and funds for other projects and collaborations.

We analysed what we spend much of our time and money on as an organisation and whose needs we serve well, asked how we could better serve our membership, and whether there are some activities that are either duplicated elsewhere or are not such a good use of resources. We held regional consultation meetings across the country, and the feedback was very thoughtful and useful. From these a number of key themes emerged:

- There was strong support for the bi-monthly newsletter Canzonetta to move to either a web-based or an emailed-out form, which is both more time-efficient and cost-effective. Consequently, Canzonetta is now edited and shaped by committee member Chris Adams, who has managed the move from print format to an electronic format that is emailed to members, while ‘unplugged’ members are still able to elect that they receive a hard copy through the post. This has saved some time, some rather tedious effort, and some money. Correspondingly, we are able to respond more fully and more promptly to inquiries, and the committee has been able to communicate much more actively with each other in between our two meetings per year.
- There was general support for the idea of trialling a part-time administrator to help with various possible tasks, as the entirely voluntary nature of CANZ organisation until now has made it difficult to embark on more significant or complex projects. Consequently, CANZ has embarked on conversations with Creative NZ about the possibility of having a part-time administrator, possibly shared with another organisation with complementary interests. This would relieve some pressure on the geographically diverse (yet consistently over-committed) volunteer-only committee membership, and be beneficial by focusing the information flow relating to specific projects through a central contact person. However there is still quite some financial uncertainty for us, and we have not yet taken that significant step.
- There was huge respect for our yearbook Canzona in its current printed form, or something similar, and no strong desire to move it to web or virtual formats. Canzona is now edited by Samuel Holloway, another committee member.

- There was widespread enthusiasm for a range of workshop possibilities that would fill various recognised gaps in the CANZ activity profile. Some of these possibilities address the needs of our ‘amateur’ members, some the needs of emerging composers who are no longer enrolled in a tertiary institution, and some involve professional chamber ensembles. Consequently, next year we are planning to branch out into a few more professional development workshop projects in three different regions, in each of which a small number of participants work for a weekend with a resident ensemble from that region.

Looking back at the activities that occupied CANZ over the past two and a half years: for four days each July the Composing Workshop held annually in Nelson (a sunny part of New Zealand’s south island) has brought young and emerging composers from across New Zealand together with some of our more senior composer-minds. The workshops have continued (since 1982) to offer a wonderful mix of facilitated workshop performances of new works by emerging composers, providing professional development and a forum where discussions and exchanges take place between students, mentors, performers and observers.

As you will have seen, in the past 12 months we have produced the double CD “Aurora Australis”, curated by Jack Body and produced by Wayne Laird of Atoll Records. This wonderful production is a selection of performances from the Asia Pacific Festival held in Wellington in 2007.

In February 2010, the Composers Association of NZ held its Annual General Meeting in Christchurch. The meeting included a celebration and awards presentation, at which the KBB/CANZ Citation for Services to New Zealand Music was presented to the composer and teacher Chris Cree Brown, and the CANZ Trust Fund Award was presented to composer-pianist Gao Ping. And in March 2011, the Annual General Meeting was held in Wellington, where we had great pleasure in presenting the Trust Fund to Michael Norris, and we acknowledged the work of the late Allan Thomas with the KBB/CANZ Citation for Services to New Zealand Music.

We continue to work closely with SOUNZ, the Centre for New Zealand Music, which is the information centre for NZ based in Wellington, and their new Executive Director, Julie Sperring. The relationship and division of responsibilities between SOUNZ (which represents NZ music) and CANZ (which is the composer network) is a fruitful one that benefits from regular discussions about such matters as composer professional development and the dissemination of our music within and beyond New Zealand.

Each year the New Zealand branch of APRA (the Australasian Performing Right Association) holds an awards evening which includes the presentation of the SOUNZ Contemporary Award. In September 2009 these awards were held for the first time in Christchurch, and the winner of the SOUNZ Contemporary Award was Ross Harris, for his 3rd Symphony. In the twelve year history of the award to that point, he was a finalist seven times and won the award four times. Sadly, due to the devastating earthquake damage in central Christchurch, it will probably be a long time before those awards are held there again. At the APRA awards in 2010, the SOUNZ Contemporary Award was won by Chris Cree Brown, with his work *Inner Bellow*, and this year the Award was very recently made to Lyell Cresswell, with his *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.

There are three composer residencies in the country, which normally each have a duration of one year (sometimes renewed for a second year). The composer-in-residence at the Lilburn Residence (former home of the late Douglas Lilburn) in Wellington is currently Juliet Palmer (returned to NZ from Canada), the newly-appointed Composer-in-Residence for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra is Jack Body, and Chris Adams is nearing the end of two years as the Mozart Fellow in Dunedin.

In late April 2010, the music of eleven NZ composers was performed at various venues in western and central Sydney during the ISCM's World New Music Days, and we were also very pleased with the concert presented by the NZ Trio in that festival, who performed a concert of almost exclusively 'kiwi' music at the Eugene Goessens Hall in the ABC building. This year's ISCM World New Music Days, held in Zagreb in April, included a performance of a work by one of our Australia-based members, Tim Bowman.

New Zealand music continues to be recognised as an important part of our culture. The Auckland-based contemporary ensemble *175 East* and the Wellington-based *Stroma* have continued to offer programmes of NZ music and new sounds from further afield. The Auckland Chamber Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, NZ Symphony Orchestra, NZ Trio, NZ String Quartet, Silencio and Southern Sinfonia have all performed NZ works in the past year, and the International Festivals (in Wellington in 2010, and Auckland this year) included a range of NZ music events.