

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Bernadette Heard
2006 Churchill Fellow

To assess training programs for professional musicians within the context of
major performing arts organisations.

- U.K., USA, Germany

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Dated

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Introduction

The fellowship enabled me to travel to the USA, UK and Germany over a period of 2 months in early 2007. This experience provided a new insight into the position of Australian orchestras and development of training programs within the context of the International network of orchestras. Furthermore, I experienced a valuable collegial connection with administrators from these international programs, forming ongoing links and opportunities for sharing knowledge.

I wish to extend my appreciation to the Churchill trust for providing this inspiring opportunity – to share knowledge about the support and training of professional musicians of the future was made all the more powerful through experiencing programs in person, providing a context for our own work within the international framework. The reputation of the Churchill trust was greatly respected and certainly opened many doors in making connections.

Thankyou to the Sydney Symphony, in particular Margaret Moore, for supporting my time away, and the ongoing development of the Sydney Symphony Education Program and the talented musicians we work with.

Sincere thanks also to my daughter Rosie, and partner Stephen, without your support this could not have been possible.

Executive Summary

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Highlights

- Experiencing high level orchestral performances and projects within the renowned concert halls of the Berlin Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, to name a few.
- Observing interactive programs connecting with disadvantaged schools in Brooklyn, South London and a juvenile high security prison in Suffolk.
- Attending training programs with leading New York teaching artists.
- Observing and participating in community massed orchestral workshops in Cambridge and Berlin.
- Experiencing a true collegial connection with administrators of training programs internationally.

Fellowship Program

	Organisation	Name	Address
1-14 April, New York	The Academy Carnegie Hall	Amy Rhodes, Director	881 Seventh Avenue New York, NY 10019 U.S.A.
	New York Philharmonic	Theodore Wiprud Director of Education	Avery Fisher Hall, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza New York, NY 10023- 6970 U.S.A.
	The Weill Music Institute Carnegie Hall	Alan Sneath Manager, Elementary School Programs	881 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019 U.S.A.
	Brooklyn Philharmonic	Greg Pierson Director of Education and Community Programs	138A Court Street Brooklyn, NY 11201 U.S.A.
	Orchestra of St. Luke's	Liz Norman Director of Education	330 West 42nd Street, 9th Floor New York, NY 10036 U.S.A.
15-20 April, Chicago	The Chicago Symphony & Civic Orchestra	Tabitha Pflieger Manager, Civic Orchestra of Chicago	Chicago Symphony Orchestra 220 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, IL 60604-2559 U.S.A.
20-26 April San Francisco	San Francisco Symphony	Ronald Galman, Director Sammi Madison, Associate Director, Education Programs	San Francisco Symphony Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102 U.S.A.
	San Francisco Symphony	Jefferson Packer San Francisco Youth Orchestra Manager	San Francisco Symphony Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102 U.S.A.

27 April - 19 May London	London Symphony Orchestra	Ajax McKerral LSO Discovery Digital Projects Manager	Barbican Centre London EC2Y 8DS, United Kingdom
	London Symphony Orchestra	Eleanor Gussman LSO Discovery Projects Manager	Barbican Centre London EC2Y 8DS, United Kingdom
	Royal Philharmonic Orchestra	James Hutchinson Head of Community and Education	16 Clerkenwell Green London EC1R 0QT, United Kingdom
	BBC "Play it again" Community program	Tim Steiner, Animateur / conductor	Cambridge
	Aldeburgh Music	Anita Crowe Director of Artist Development	Snape Maltings Concert Hall Snape Suffolk 1P17 1SP, United Kingdom
	Aldeburgh Music	Phillippa Reive Head of Education	Snape Maltings Concert Hall Snape Suffolk 1P17 1SP, United Kingdom
	Southbank Sinfonia	Katharine Verney Program Director	St John's Waterloo Waterloo Road London SE1 8TY, United Kingdom
	Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment	Cherry Forbes, Education Manager	Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 4th Floor, 9 Irving Street London, WC2H 7AH, United Kingdom
	The Sound Exchange	Julia Williamson, Community and Education Manager Richard Staney, Digital Projects Manager	Philharmonia Orchestra 6th Floor The Tower Building 11 York Road London SE1 7NX, United Kingdom
20-26 May Berlin	Berliner Philharmonie	Catherine Milliken, Education Manager	Herbert-von-Karajan- Str.1 10785 Berlin
	Berliner Philharmonie	Frau Fleck Director, Orchestra Academy	Herbert-von-Karajan- Str.1 10785 Berlin

Building Australia's cultural future

Australia has a strong artistic life, through established performing arts organisations and as an appealing destination for touring international artists. Essential to the placement of the Australian arts within the international scene, and to the lifeline of a city's cultural life, is the residency of a fine symphony orchestra. Within this country we have a network of state based symphony orchestras, in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane and Hobart.

These resident orchestras contribute to their communities in a range of ways: from main stage concert series; commissioning new Australian work; commercial main-stream concerts; public outdoor performances; festivals; intimate community interaction with hospitals, clubs, corporate groups, individuals and families. Most importantly to the future of audiences and musicians alike, each Australian orchestra has an Education program, where they introduce the thrill of live orchestral music to a range of age groups, linking with curriculum and syllabus documents, training teachers, enhancing the local school arts system, and providing inspiring workshops and training opportunities for all levels of orchestral players.

This last point, to provide training opportunities for future musicians, is essential for the ongoing success of Australia's orchestral network. Currently the Sydney Symphony includes 96 permanent musicians, of which the majority are Australian citizens. Similarly, throughout the orchestral network, the general population of professional musicians in Australian orchestras is comprised of Australian citizens. Many of these have either trained here or overseas, and some of this group represent those who have moved to Australia and sought citizenship. Positions auditioned within our orchestras are often advertised internationally, and it is our intention to always appoint the best applicant regardless of

nationality, but similarly it is our duty to support Australian young artists and equip them for the opportunity to compete on an international level. Whilst the orchestras contain an international membership, it is clear the majority are Australians, therefore the core group of Australian musicians must be of the highest standard possible to ensure the artistic integrity and future of these ensembles.

Australia has a rich resource of emerging talented musicians, and fine teachers and institutions in which to train them. However it is not uncommon for promising students to further their postgraduate studies by traveling overseas, to the US and Europe, in order to finely hone their skills at their chosen art form. Many do not return due to opportunities arising overseas. In addition, musicians seeking work in an orchestra are required to have an extended skill set beyond those for performing within the ensemble. There are a myriad of opportunities to become involved in community and education work, and limited structures to gain this experience.

Recognising this gap in the system, the Sydney Symphony established in 1995 a unique training and mentoring orchestra, the Sydney Sinfonia, further enhanced by the Sydney Symphony Fellowship, established in 2001, both programs drawing from national auditions. Through these programs, musicians within the Sydney Symphony act as mentors for these tertiary and graduate musicians, sitting alongside them in rehearsal and performance, providing 'on the job' experience otherwise unavailable in Australia. To enhance this opportunity, the Education staff of the Sydney Symphony coordinates a range of activities, concert opportunities, masterclasses and enhancements to construct an intense training program for one year.

This model is very successful, with greatly increased numbers of Australian musicians being appointed to permanent positions within the local orchestras, having participated in the Sydney Sinfonia and Fellowship programs. There is

now a career bridge between study and the profession, a steady pool of skilled casual musicians to enhance orchestration when necessary, and a new level of engagement for the musicians of the Sydney Symphony, as they embrace their role as mentor.

It is interesting to note that these programs evolved organically according to need and interest, through consultation and the great support of the musicians and management of the Sydney Symphony, and the enlightened generosity of individual donors and corporate sponsors. Elements of the programs were devised according to need within the Australian Arts community through the leadership of Richard Gill, Artistic Director of the Sydney Sinfonia and Sydney Symphony Education Program, and Roger Benedict, Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Fellowship. It is timely at this stage of both programs to further investigate similar training opportunities offered overseas, in order to assess the future of both these valuable programs in a wider context.

Best practice in Orchestral training overseas

Similar to the Sydney Symphony philosophy, programs I visited overseas recognised the extended skill set required for professional musicians in the current environment. Musicians must be versatile, to equally recognise the importance of orchestral, solo and chamber performance, along with teaching, and the importance of valuing to become a better musician through developing all these areas. Each addressed this need in a variety of ways, many of which were applicable to the Australian training system.

Of those I visited, the programs most closely related philosophically to the Sydney Symphony programs are London's Southbank Sinfonia, Aldeburgh Music's Artist Development Programs through the Britten-Pears Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic's Orchestra Academy and Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Civic Orchestra.

Southbank Sinfonia is unique within the UK orchestral scene, in that the organisation is not exclusively linked to any of the London orchestras, but draw upon aspects from a number of organisations and ensembles to create a rich program of performance opportunities and experience. Amongst others, they work with musicians and administration from the Royal Opera House Opera and Ballet Orchestra for experience in pit orchestral playing, Baroque Specialists and the Handel Festival for baroque experience, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields for leadership, working without a conductor and developing listening skills within a chamber group, BBC Concert Orchestra to work on recording skills, light music, and sight reading, and a range of orchestras for insight into the varying requirements for audition preparation and presentation.

Musicians of the Southbank Sinfonia participate in a one year program which involves full scale concert programs, training and seminars devised to support

their personal and business skills development, chamber music, masterclasses and audition preparation.

The Civic Orchestra of Chicago is the only training orchestra affiliated with a major American orchestra, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Similarities with Sydney's Sinfonia are evident in the appointment of 'mentors' from the ranks of the professional musicians, and the opportunity to work with a range of conductors, available through their appointment with the hosting orchestra, the CSO. In this case, a smaller group of sixteen coaches are exclusively available to the young musicians of the Civic Orchestra. However their participation does not include sitting alongside them during rehearsal and performance, rather they work on sectionals, tutoring and advising.

In recent years, the Civic Orchestra devised a series of musician workshops for their members, which were of great interest. Led by a musician from the CSO, these emerging professionals were offered information and training on a range of aspects including arts management structures, public speaking, community outreach, leading rehearsals, teaching techniques, and performance preparation, including programming.

Aldeburgh Music in Suffolk is home to the Britten-Pears Young Artist Program, which incorporates a range of training and performance opportunities designed to be a "stepping stone to the profession". Participants in these programs are exposed to artists, conductors, tutors and soloists from the highest level of European musicianship. Again, the desire to support versatile performers is strong, and this program rightfully attracts a very high level of international applicants.

The orchestras listed above incorporated a regular concert series, offering performance opportunities which address the need for experience in the major orchestral repertoire, whilst allowing a more considered approach to their

preparation, often with more extended rehearsal periods than that which is found in the professional orchestras.

The Berlin Philharmonic's Orchestra Academy is a beautiful example of an orchestra creating their own future, ensuring the tradition of the Berlin Philharmonic's unique and highly specialised sound is passed on through this training program.

Participants receive individual instruction by members of the Philharmonic, experience a range of world class conductors through participating in actual orchestral rehearsals and concerts, and have a busy chamber music schedule as well. The success of this program is evident in the fact that nearly all graduates go on immediately to positions in leading orchestras, 55% as section principals. With 25% of new recruits sourced through the Academy, they have indeed succeeded in securing the tradition and standard of the orchestra.

Through the generosity of each host, I was able to assess which areas of skill development are most highly valued for the young emerging professional, and contrast what opportunities we currently offer. The chance to perform large scale works from the orchestral repertoire was deemed essential, as was the need to provide opportunities for them to have access to high level conductors and soloists through masterclasses.

Education programs tailoring to community needs

Strong community links, with the aim to build a more meaningful connection with orchestral repertoire and build a stronger local identity for a symphony orchestra, was evident in a range of programs through the UK, US and Berlin. I witnessed many opportunities for professional musicians to connect with musicians of all ages and experience levels. The resulting workshops or performances were memorable not only for the musical result, but the myriad of interpersonal and social benefits, and the level of engagement musicians from all backgrounds enjoyed with each other.

- The London Response / Animateurs / Creative events

London Symphony Orchestra, through the LSO Discovery Program at St Luke's is an inspirational example of an orchestral education program with strong links to the entire musical community in the local area, from community and youth choirs, a technology centre, to a resident gamelan orchestra. Since the restoration of a Hawksmoor church in Old Street, near the LSO's home at the Barbican, LSO St Luke's has proved to become "a physical embodiment of the LSO's aspiration to draw in more people to enjoy music - from the local community and around the world." ¹

While visiting LSO St Luke's I observed a program titled *The Lite of Spring* which culminated in a public performance. Musicians within this orchestra represented many levels of experience, and each performed parts arranged especially to match their skills. Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was arranged with three or sometimes four levels of difficulty for each part, allowing an LSO musician, a tertiary music student, a player of moderate experience and a beginner to all sit

¹ <http://lso.co.uk/aboutus/aboutlso.stlukes>

together and perform the same work, at an appropriately challenging level of difficulty.

Linked to Gergiev's main stage performance series of works at the Barbican by Prokofiev, Stravinsky and Debussy, this was part of a wider program, where the LSO presented a complementary set of workshops and performances at the St Luke's centre to reinforce their programming and provide an opportunity for their community and audiences to 'get inside the music'.

Similarly, the Berlin Philharmonic follow the 'London response' in relating creative educational projects to the main stage performances. Whilst in Berlin, I observed two very different programs, both designed to provide insight and connection with the orchestra and its repertoire ensuring that the Orchestra and its repertoire is made accessible to a wide range of members of the community throughout Berlin who may not necessarily have already found the way to the Orchestra or the Philharmonie..

Leading up to a performance of Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, the musician/composer and the choreographer - Cathy Milliken and Rhys Martin - and several musicians from the Berlin Philharmonic worked with young brass players and dancers to devise their own representation of the themes of the work. This involved improvisation, composition and choreography resulting in an installation performance in the foyer prior to the main stage performance. This insight into composition and operatic presentation was on a very engaging level for the young musicians involved, and certainly made the Weill performance easier to relate to and understand.

Similar models are to be found in London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, where a long standing tradition of training and support for their musicians exists in developing their skills to work with small and large groups from the community – families, schools and hospitals among others. Of particular note was their

commitment to providing an outreach experience that was meaningful and of an extremely high quality. Whilst I did not have an opportunity to observe this work in action, I was very grateful to attend and observe a full day training session with the musicians from the orchestra, and through conversations throughout the day, was impressed by their confidence and skill in improvising, and obvious commitment and experience with this sort of work.

Again in the UK, following the BBC's television program *Play it again*, whereby public personalities such as Aled Jones and Bill Oddie were encouraged to revisit lapsed instrumental studies, or begin playing a new instrument, the BBC extended the experience to the public. Numerous public one day workshops were staged throughout the UK, with the goal to reinvigorate music performance for members of each community, inviting them to come together for a day of rehearsal, culminating in a performance at the end of the day. I attended, and sang with, the Cambridge area event.

Attendees were divided into groups: singers; percussion; orchestra (containing carefully arranged levels of difficulty within each part); and guitars. Members of the BBC orchestra, chorus, and specialist tutors were brought in to work in small groups throughout the day, followed by a massed performance / presentation for the public. Every level of experience and expertise was catered for, and the sense of community, as professional musicians played alongside enthusiastic amateurs, was inspiring.

Many orchestras had programs whereby their musicians tutored school aged students in a workshop setting, in some cases leading to a performance. In all of these workshops, professional musicians from the orchestra provided an insight into playing each part that was invaluable for the young musicians. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in London worked at a local school with students from the area, on a collection of baroque repertoire. Led by Cherry Forbes, the professional musicians also performed on their period instruments,

which added a deeper stylistic understanding and appreciation for their young students.

San Francisco Symphony has created a continuum of support for music students, beginning with their in-school program named *Adventures in Music* (AIM) for students in Years 1-2 (AIM 2), and Years 3-5 (AIM 1), developing to the Opus Program, which provides support for middle and high school instrumental studies, through to the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, led by conductor Benjamin Shwartz. Under the umbrella of the San Francisco Symphony, instrumentalists between the ages of 10 and 20 participate in this vibrant youth orchestra, making strong links to the profession through regular tutoring by members of the SFS, guest conductor rehearsals, and concert performances in Davies Symphony Hall. Additionally, their *Music for Families* four-concert series, designed for families of the Greater Bay Area, are engaging and fun, and a great way to pass the Symphony tradition from one generation to the next. Part performance, part family outing, these affordable afternoons spark the imaginations of the whole family. The extraordinary contributions of the SFS Education Programs have made to the musical life of the area is inspiring through their engagement at all levels, and the sense of ownership by the community.

Under the leadership of Sir Simon Rattle, the Berlin Philharmonic has adopted an approach to “make the orchestra’s work and its music accessible to the widest public. The program aims to awaken in people of all ages, as well as those from differing social and cultural backgrounds and of varying talents, an enthusiasm for active and creative involvement in music.”² In addition to the Weill project discussed earlier, this includes several performances involving massed ensembles of dancers or instrumentalists from the school system in Berlin. I observed a weekend workshop at the Berlin State Music Academy, where high school students were coached by members of the Berlin Philharmonic,

² <http://www.berliner-philharmoniker.de/en/2019/>

culminating the following week in a massed performance under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Each instrumental section was coached by a member of the Berlin Philharmonic, and as I walked between rooms I observed the musicians leading the rehearsals were consistently providing valuable insight into the intricacies of their part, plus dealing well with a range of levels of performance skill. Groups were small enough to allow this, and the mix of formal and informal pedagogy proved very productive in working with this age group.

- The American model / Teaching Artists / Support for schools

Cultural institutions in New York, and the US in general, have taken a different approach, tailored to their arts educational system. Whilst the “London approach” often involves one-off projects, creativity and improvisation based in nature, and mostly linked to the main stage program, the American model presents as a holistic school based approach, providing an ongoing program of music education for schools who choose to participate. These school partnerships may include the introduction of a Teaching Artist, who visits the school on an ongoing basis, and may be accompanied at times by musicians from the orchestra. Programs often involve general classroom music activities in the absence of a specialist teacher within the school, recorder tuition, and music appreciation.

I was most interested in the training of these Teaching Artists, as it seemed a version of our Fellowship program, with a stronger emphasis on school based education. Teaching Artists at the New York Philharmonic participate in a comprehensive training program, involving a year long apprenticeship, regular meetings and workshops to discuss best practice, and an ongoing emphasis on supporting their careers as performers through chamber performances. These highly skilled and motivated musicians displayed a deep commitment to their work, and the level of collaboration and supportive feedback was evident as they

guided new apprentices through the challenges of their program. The experienced teaching artists learnt a great deal through the reflective practice of mentoring.

- Social justice / Work in prisons

Benjamin Britten established an arts festival in Suffolk in the late 1940's, and subsequently converting a disused maltings into a concert hall, the program based in Snape has developed to become a significant haven for musicians. With a strong tradition of education and community, Aldeburgh Music is guided by Britten's philosophy to continue "breaking down of boundaries between the amateur and professional". Through a range of art forms and performing media, their innovative education program is defined by the principal of "education through the arts, rather than arts education".³

Whilst visiting Aldeburgh, I was privileged to be presented with an opportunity to observe preparations for a new project in their Prisons program, and speak with those involved at the site. This particular visit was significant for my study, as it focused on a unique level of arts collaboration with a specific community – the inmates of Carlford Unit – a Section 53 Unit for juvenile offenders aged between 15 and 18. Projects were devised using the arts, specifically technology and music, to enhance the skill development, self esteem and overall reintegration capabilities for all inmates. This program has been in effect for nearly 7 years, and consisted of a range of short term or ongoing projects. Previous activities included the set up and maintenance of an in-house radio station, creating positive links with local community and business through composing jingles and advertising campaigns, and film projects.

³ <http://www.aldeburgh.co.uk/education>

Conclusions

Australia has a vibrant Arts Education community, and a network of musicians committed to passing on the tradition of their chosen art forms. Through experiencing first hand the ways in which the training of young professionals was approached, through a wide variety of programs, it became obvious why these particular groups were so successful. Their ability to collaborate with their local community, assess their own educational and professional systems and tailor their program to address their specific needs.

To a large degree, and partly due to the fact that we are so seemingly isolated in Australia, we are presenting some very creative ways of finding the 'gaps' in our own system, and starting to see the results of this work. Through collaboration with other arts organisations and tertiary institutions we can target individual emerging artists and ensure we provide extension opportunities throughout the spectrum. This will certainly avoid doubling up on particular age groups or performance levels, or missing a group in need of enhancement from the industry.

Closer collaboration with the tertiary institutions would be beneficial. More contact and opportunities for feedback with teachers, professional musicians and other arts organisations will also increase the opportunities and international profile for all.

Close contact with the state and federal education bodies will serve to ensure we can better identify the areas of need, and the opportunities for us to enhance the good work already happening in schools. One example of this is through our resources and teacher training programs, an example of best practice in music education. There are many initiatives observed overseas of using technology to increase access to these resources, which are applicable here in Australia to support the tyranny of distance. Our artist training programs currently support an

internal continuum of training for the future musicians of Australia, and closer collaborative work with educational bodies at all levels will ensure we can better target areas of need.

Implementation and dissemination

- Present at conference of Australian Orchestral Education Programs (August 2007)
- Present internally to Sydney Symphony administration & musicians (July-August 2007)
- Ongoing communication with international programs, investigate more formal links and associations with key groups
- Present to NSW Department of Education based Arts Unit and ArtsNSW representatives (September 2007)
- Input into policy revision focus group for Youth and Emerging Artists, and Young People and the Arts (August 2007)

Recommendations

Having seen such a wide range of programs over the period of travel, there are many detailed observations which are being communicated to the relevant Arts Organisations, and implemented in our own programs at the Sydney Symphony. I welcome the opportunity to speak further to any group about any particular area of this study. For the purposes of this report, I have highlighted a number of primary recommendations and achievable outcomes.

- Further develop the range of opportunities young artists working with the Sydney Symphony experience, to provide a thorough training program by enhancing performance opportunities, mentor training, and collaboration with institutions.
- Continue advocacy of the Sydney Symphony Artist Development programs as an internationally comparable opportunity for young emerging artists by disseminating information and updates about our programs, and participant's achievements.
- Create links and ongoing communication with overseas orchestral education programs to ensure our placement in the international training circuit.
- Continue and strengthen links with the NSW Department of Education and Training, Australia Council, ArtsNSW and national education bodies to ensure a national minimum standard for the arts in schools is established and supported.
- Provide new opportunities for revision of current arts education systems, and community arts needs, ensuring the major performing arts groups have insight and opportunities to provide enhancement for already strong school arts programs.