

# The Orchestras We Need

Malcolm Gillies

*In this fourth Annual Address of the Music Council of Australia Malcolm Gillies turns the spotlight on orchestral music-making. He surveys the orchestras we have, and the orchestras we might have had; he then speculates about the orchestras twenty-first-century Australia might need. Balancing perspectives of excellence, education, entertainment and economics, Gillies proposes a new positioning of orchestras in relation to the broader range of artistic production.*

If you look up the “Timeline of the Nation”, unveiled by the National Council for the Centenary of Federation in 2001 ([www.centenary.gov.au/nph-arch/2001](http://www.centenary.gov.au/nph-arch/2001)), you will find just one mention of the “orchestra”. Amid the political, economic, cultural and lifestyle events celebrated on the “Timeline” there are three entries which represent Australian advancement for the year 1906: the world’s first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*; the repealing of a New South Wales law that prohibited daytime swimming; and the establishment of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, as Australia’s “first permanent orchestra”. Now, although you might dispute both the date, and the orchestra, for holding that distinction, the significance of such an event is clear. As the young nation found its feet it was starting to develop those signs of civic culture, sophistication and pride, already well known in Europe and, since the mid nineteenth century, in North America as well.

Ninety-nine years on—and despite having first founded a “permanent” orchestra just as the heyday of the orchestra, as a primary vehicle of musical expression, was fast coming to an end—Australia has many permanent, professional symphony orchestras, and a plethora of other orchestras: two pit orchestras to service the needs of opera and ballet; regional orchestras, from Frankston to Fremantle; youth orchestras, from Armidale to Adelaide; and orchestras specializing in particular styles, like the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, or repertory type, such as the Australian Chamber Orchestra, or particular instruments—the Australian Mandolin Orchestra, for example. We have much to celebrate in Australia from our century of orchestras, a century—by and large—of growing professionalism and community engagement. For a youngish country we spend a lot of time—and a very high percentage of our arts money—on these orchestras, playing music written primarily by Europeans who died before our grandparents were born. To a largely transplanted European culture these orchestras—as in North America—gave a connection with “home”, and gave tangible evidence that we were as cultured as our European relatives. At their best, they have also provided vehicles for our composers and performers to express their growing Australian identity, and, more recently, provided important ways of reflecting our increasingly multicultural sense of community.

Of course, we could have established orchestras in a different way, and with different affiliations. We could have gone, as Percy Grainger advocated in a fearless article of 1927, entitled “The Orchestra for Australia: Possibility of a New Kind of Growing Up” (*Australian Musical News*, 16/8 (Mar. 1927), 11-13), that is, in rejecting the formula of instruments, and of instrumental balance, sanctioned by classical-romantic music, through basing orchestras on the more recent, sometimes more efficient instruments that were most played in a community. In Grainger’s day these were the saxophone, the piano, even the ukulele. But Australia in the 1930s and 1940s, as it laid the foundations of today’s professional orchestras, opted for a traditional model, and one mindful of Australia’s constitution as a federation of states. We rationed professional orchestras on the basis of one *city* per state, as an early and imperfect example of that concept of equalisation of services typical of federations, and even seen in the Telstra privatization debate today. Australia did not manage to found a national symphony orchestra—perhaps it was the tyranny of distance, perhaps it was the jealously guarded “federation of sovereign states”—but Australia did develop a distinctive model: largely paid for by the Commonwealth through its broadcasting company, utterly state-based in location of individual orchestras’ activities, but strongly centralized in terms of circulation of conductors, soloists and management accountabilities.

A key moment in this evolution of state-based orchestras came in 1938-9 when the visiting maestro Malcolm Sargent recommended to the ABC the foundation of a national orchestra, after a suitable retraining of local talent in Europe, while the local Bernard Heinze advocated strengthening the city-based orchestras, invoking what he saw as the highly successful model of his own Melbourne orchestra. Others dreamed of a national orchestra, too, such as Ernest Llewellyn, who in the 1960s prompted a study of the virtues of establishing a professional national orchestra in Canberra, and Paul Keating in the 1990s, who looked to elevate one state-based orchestra, the Sydney Symphony, above the rest of the pack to establish it as an ensemble of “world standard”. “This flagship orchestra will tour throughout Australia, become a major cultural export and strengthen its program of international recording”, the *Creative Nation* blueprint of 1994 predicted (p. 27), echoing the way that QANTAS had outgrown its “Q” and “NT” origins to become the national and international carrier of Australian choice. And it echoed Eugene Goossens’ expectation of 1947 that within two years of his arrival he would establish the Sydney Symphony among the six top orchestras of the world. (Goossens identified the other five orchestras as being those in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, along with Toscanini’s NBC orchestra, and Beecham’s Royal Philharmonic, in London.)

What is interesting is that while the six state orchestras kept the civic connection, albeit, until recently, strongly regulated by the national broadcaster, national orchestras of a sort *have* grown up over the last thirty years under the influence of strong, talented and charismatic directors: Richard Tognetti’s Australian Chamber Orchestra, Paul Dyer’s Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and Paul Grabowsky’s Australian Art Orchestra, are three well-known examples. Against the strongly subsidised, civic-based orchestras of the states, these generally smaller, younger, and more fleet-

of-foot orchestras have built up strong followings across the nation, with only small contributions of government funding despite their large travel and accommodation bills. If you look at our advertising billboards you will see Emma-Jane Murphy, principal cello of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, sporting her blackberry, a device, as the Telstra advertisement proclaims, for “people constantly on the road”. No longer, in the public consciousness, is the orchestra necessarily something fixed in one city, as a civic function. The counter-images of the musician *as wanderer*, and the orchestra as responsive, entrepreneurial, “creative class”, travelling outfit, are now also strongly before the public imagination.

Hence, to my topic: the orchestras we need, rather than the orchestras we have inherited or might have had. Is the national and transnational orchestra, the type of professional orchestra we ultimately have to have? How important now is the civic base of an orchestra? What are our entitlements *as citizens* to the provision of orchestral services of quality? And, what do audiences—as distinct from musicians, managers and governments—now really want?

When Dick Letts invited me to give this lecture, I thought of his opening lines in a Music Council of Australia critique of the Orchestras Review Report, the so-called Strong Report, which is officially titled *A New Era* (DOCITA, 2005). Letts’ column began: “Unfortunately, we have not had a review that asked, ‘What do we need to do to give Australia the best orchestras it could reasonably have?’” ([www.mca.org.au](http://www.mca.org.au), Mar. 2005). Indeed, Letts went on in his commentary: “James Strong and his team have produced a decent report that answers the wrong question. That question might be characterised as, ‘How can we buy six orchestras for the price of four? Or even better, three?’”

Unfortunately, as Letts also observes, it was not up to Strong and his team to set the question. Government reports, like examination papers, are not conducted that way.

The question that the review committee really did have to ask was: given that “the terms of reference for this review preclude changes to the ongoing base grants for the symphony and pit orchestras” (*A New Era*, p. 4), how can orchestral services most sustainably be provided over the coming years? In fact, it was even more specific that that, as the Terms of Reference stated: “The Review will assume the continuation of ongoing government funding support for the orchestras *at existing levels and in similar proportions from the Australian and state governments*” (*A New Era*, p. 115). (I stress this proportional limitation, as many in the press have preached that we should be robbing Peter, who seemed normally to be living in Sydney, or sometimes, Melbourne, to be paying Pauline, who seemed normally to be living in the land of BAPH—that is, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart.)

The review concentrated, accordingly, on “the financial viability of the orchestras, individually and collectively” (*A New Era*, p. 3). It was not an “artistic evaluation”. As the one career musician on the three-person committee, however, I do want this afternoon to address some issues to do with that future of the “best possible” orchestras that Letts saw to be the real question the review committee should have been addressing.

What has been impressive about Australia’s professional orchestral scene over the last decade has been the incredible individual achievements, such as the recent growth in ticket sales (the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra), the building of a most impressive record of sponsorship support (the West Australian Symphony Orchestra), and an incredible record of cost containment (Orchestra Victoria). And these achievements have occurred against a backdrop of average government subsidy falling from seventy-six per cent to sixty-one per cent over the last two decades. Of course, orchestras cannot expect too much sympathy from the other art forms, such as opera, which gains under forty per cent of its income from government funding, drama and dance, which gain around thirty per cent, and music theatre and popular music, which score virtually no support at all (*A New Era*, p. 32). Nor is there much sympathy from the rest of the music sector, where dozens of quality organisations fight over a \$4 million distribution from the Australia Council, less than a tenth of the Australian Government’s contribution to the eight professional orchestras. And that is before the additional \$25 million allocated by the Australian Government in May’s budget in response to the Strong Report.

Any observations about differing levels of arts funding trigger an avalanche of equity arguments, which touch the very root of the politics of federalism, the equalisation of services and notions of citizen entitlement. The fact that the orchestras are regularly sitting at or near the top of the pile of public subsidization seems only to sharpen the venom of comparative argumentation within the orchestral sector itself.

We have comparison by *dollars*: is it fair that the Queensland Government chips in more dollars for The Queensland Orchestra than the Victorian Government does for the Melbourne Symphony?

We have comparison by *per capita* spending: is it fair that the South Australian Government spends more per capita on its orchestra than the New South Wales Government does on its orchestras?

We have comparison by *percentages*: is it fair that the Tasmanian Symphony, even before the Strong Report, gained a thirty-six per cent loading, against the “base rate” for the Melbourne Symphony, and nothing like that for Orchestra Victoria? (*A New Era*, p. 30.)

And then the big one of percentages, currently exercising many bureaucratic minds across the land: is it fair that the Commonwealth puts in about eighty per cent of the government funding, as against the states, that by mutual agreement have traditionally contributed about twenty per cent? This is particularly important as the Commonwealth flags its substantially increased dollar contribution, but has tied it to a similar proportional increase from the states.

Amid these battles of equity and entitlement, I marvel at how we ignore one factor, in particular: the role of local and city government. If, following Heinze, Tribe, Keating, and Nugent, the vitality of these orchestras does reside in their relationship with their *city*, why is local government contributing virtually nothing to the costs of these civic

orchestras? Canada, with a similar distribution of similar orchestras, has a three-fold formula of government support, of forty per cent federal, forty per cent state and twenty per cent local/city government contribution.

Now, such a wealth of comparative possibilities allows everyone to make a case for being hard done by. But it masks the fact that, even with government funding subsidy ranging in 2003 from forty-six (the SSO) to eighty-one per cent (the TSO), only two of Australia's orchestras appear to be sustainable in the long term: the Sydney Symphony and the Melbourne Symphony (*A New Era*, pp. 54-5). And these two, beyond some undeniably good artistic planning and management, are in such a positive position primarily through issues of critical mass: because they are the symphony orchestras of our two largest cities.

Now, the three among the twenty recommendations of the Strong Report that gained immediate national attention were those that advocated cutting the size of three orchestras: Queensland to a triple-wind orchestra, Adelaide to full double-wind, and Tasmania to "small double-wind" (*A New Era*, pp. 95-99). Less noticed was the Report's referring of the two pit orchestras for a further review, given the total unsustainability of another orchestra, the Sydney-based Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, the unfortunately acronymed AOBO.

What mattered was not so much the current level of debt, but the projections of sustainability in the coming years. Why these four orchestras were singled out, was seen in a quiet little table mid-way through the report (*A New Era*, p. 55). It showed the chilling figures that the "average annual growth in earned income required to achieve financial viability by 2010" was a totally impossible forty per cent for the AOBO, and nineteen per cent for The Queensland Orchestra, fourteen per cent for Tasmania and ten per cent for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Orchestra Victoria, although well in the black for the moment through incredible self-discipline, would need a twelve per cent annual increase in the medium term. Given the effort and expenditure already going into marketing for many orchestras, such additional increases in box office or sponsorship are largely unattainable. (Between 2001 and 2003 marketing expenditure of the orchestras in total went up by some \$1.6 million (*A New Era*, p. 42), yet box-office income, for instance, only went up by \$2.2 million (p. 27).)

The three contentious recommendations about cuts to orchestral size are worth reading. Of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the report concluded, in recommending a cut in ensemble size from forty-seven to thirty-eight: "Difficult and controversial though these changes will be, the review sees no alternative consistent with its terms of reference if the orchestra is to remain financially viable for the remainder of the current decade and beyond" (p. 99). But it also states: "The only feasible alternative to structural change would be for governments to accept [that] the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in its current form will require ongoing government funding of between 85 per cent and 90 per cent of its total revenue" (p. 98).

As you know, there was an unheard-of chorus of unanimity from both sides of the Australian Parliament—and cries of dismay from music-lovers in three states—to news of the Report's recommendations for cuts. Senator George Brandis (Liberal, Queensland) commented to *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "To ask whether an orchestra is sustainable and then to conclude that, if it is not, it should be cut back, is to ask the wrong question. Since no Australian orchestra is sustainable in the sense of being commercially self-sufficient or even close to being so, the real issue, given that reality, is whether the Government nevertheless accepts that orchestras are a sufficiently important part of the infrastructure of our community and of the social capital of our nation that they should be supported. It is my very firm belief that the answer to that question is yes" (*SMH*, 19 March 2005).

From the Labor side Senator Linda Kirk (South Australia) was outraged. Adelaide would end up having only a third of the orchestral players of Sydney or Melbourne, which she saw as an insult to a "vibrant, arts-rich state" (*Advertiser*, 21 March 2005).

Wonderful though this bi-partisan support for music is, and one backed up by a powerful quartet of South Australian Federal ministers not known for their soft-heartedness, the question still remains: is there a limit to the percentage of government dependency? And more: is it prudent to maintain current orchestra sizes at a time when the safety net of the ABC is finally being pulled from under the orchestras? Little noticed amid the hoo-haa about orchestral cuts was the Strong Report's first and most important recommendation: that the six symphony orchestras—now twenty years on from the Tribe Report's recommendation for divestment—finally be divested from the ABC, and established as independent companies.

Of course, with The Queensland Orchestra already seventy-nine, and the Tasmanian Symphony eighty-one per cent dependent upon government funding *before the Report's recommendations*, it is not unreasonable to probe the limits of such funding support. Back to that sentence from the Report: "The only feasible alternative to structural change is to accept that [for Tasmania] a continuing level of government support of between eighty-five and ninety per cent would be needed" (p. 98). (That means that from the real price of a seat in a Tasmanian concert of, say, around \$300, governments—state and federal—would be contributing around \$250 to \$270 per seat. Expressed that way, the tax-paying side of the music-lover, but more so, the non-music-lover, starts to kick in. When is enough, enough?) Now, the Australian Government has put nearly \$10 million extra to support these orchestras to maintain their current size over the next few years, although I am sure that many musicians in Australia could have suggested other ways of spending that extra \$10 million, or would, at least, have appreciated the debate.

Even that level of additional support still begs the question of whether these extra-subsidized levels among the BA(P)H orchestras will, in the long term, either be sustained by governments, or lead to more sustainable orchestras in the future. Given the five-yearly cycle of crisis and new solutions becoming customary in this orchestral sector, will we in 2009 be having another review, and yet another call for a bail out? Are some of the orchestras now being set up

for yet another fall? But this time, as independent companies no different from so many other arts organizations where if you go broke, you risk going bust? The answer to these questions will reside in the fine print of the compacts now being reached between federal, state (and, I hope, local) governments, and in the quality of management of the newly independent orchestras.

Martin Buzacott, here in Brisbane, quickly put his finger on this pulse, in observing of The Queensland Orchestra: “It’s the salary load, it’s the number of players, that’s holding back this orchestra artistically, structurally, administratively; and the Strong Inquiry has actually given a solution to that” (“Orchestra Discord”, Stateline, ABC TV, Queensland, 18 March 2005).

The Strong Review still played, as it was required, to the line of state entitlements rather than citizen entitlements for comparable services. Canberra and Newcastle, with comparable populations to Hobart and musical lives otherwise just as vibrant, for instance, gain no such access to professional orchestral services (although the Canberra Symphony—along with the Darwin Symphony—did, for the first time, gain some \$100,000 from the Commonwealth as a result of this review). There is certainly no “universal services guarantee” here for music-lovers living beyond the state capitals.

So, these six state-based orchestras, established through a strong belief in the civic needs of individual cities, will remain as the bedrock of the Australian orchestral system. But no longer will they be subsidiaries of an all-powerful and sometimes all-forgiving national broadcaster. No: they will be definitely and definitively on their own.

Looking to the future, and keeping in mind those high-quality national and transnational ensembles, less subsidised yet increasingly criss-crossing the country and the globe, is the civic basis of an orchestra really so important? Finally having achieved that local control recommended since Tribe in 1985, and reinforced by *Creative Nation* in 1994 and Nugent in 2000, has the world, in fact, already moved on, under the twin forces of advances in information technology and changes in the cost and flexibility of transportation?

With subscribers declining, and single-ticket sales generally rising (*A New Era*, p. 34), we are following the international trend towards more spontaneous purchasing of entertainment. Rather than following the local team through thick and thin, the consumer—particularly the younger consumer—is more interested in what is new, vibrant, varied, even sexy. The civic, or touring, basis of the ensemble is largely irrelevant to the new consumer, who is interested in the quality delivered here and now. As even with football, affiliations of taste and style are growing at the expense of time-hallowed affiliations of locality.

A 2002 study of “how Americans relate classical music and their local orchestras” (*Classical Music Consumer Segmentation Study*, 2002, [www.knightfdn.org](http://www.knightfdn.org)), commissioned by the Knight Foundation and fifteen American orchestras, reveals some really important characteristics of the contemporary orchestral audience in the United States. I suggest that the characteristics of our Australian audiences may not be that much different. First, it highlights how thinking primarily about the live audience in the concert hall may not be the right approach to take. In connecting orchestras with broadcasting companies our forbears may have had it right, after all! For the study finds that, even in 2002, radio is the dominant way in which consumers listen to classical music. Then we have recordings, and, following that, live performances. What is more: these different modes of presentation reinforce each other (p. 7). And where do these Americans listen to this classical, orchestral music? First, in the car, then in the home and lastly in the concert hall (p. 8). And who is doing this listening? The answer is not primarily specialist listeners, but rather people who are “casually involved with the art form”: “only ten per cent of potential classical consumers think of themselves as ‘critical listeners’, while seventy-eight per cent are ‘casual listeners’ and eleven per cent are ‘uninterested listeners’” (p. 8). That’s right, of the potential audience—not your hardened subscribers, of course, and not the vast majority of citizens who have no interest in classical music at all—more are likely to be “uninterested” than “critical listeners”. And that is because of the social dimension of attending or listening to music. Many with “taste dissonance” take part because their partner wants to take part: they would probably prefer to be at the football or playing with their computer, but their partner or their social set happen to be classical music-lovers. Others are there for the social or business networking, and live for the interval rather than what is on either side of it. The study also found that people are disinclined to travel more than about forty kilometres to attend a concert (p. 14).

These findings, in total, suggest that the culture of the strong civic orchestra with its strong band of regular music lovers is under threat, although it is interesting to note how Melbourne and Adelaide are currently bucking this trend, with signs of some growth in subscribers, against the tendency in the other states (*A New Era*, p. 34), and internationally. And it does suggest that the orchestras, while preparing to divest from the ABC, have been wise in seeing the link of radio as still a most important way of holding and building their audience.

Two other results from this 2002 study of fifteen American orchestras and their audiences are important. One is that nearly half of concert *subscribers* were over the age of sixty-five, and seventeen per cent were over the age of seventy-five. This figure stresses both the disinclination of younger attendees to commit to the full schedule of subscription concerts, but also to the worryingly skewed age profile of the audience. It suggests that the trend towards morning and afternoon, or early-evening, concerts might profitably intensify—to the convenience of many older supporters—although enough “after-hours” opportunities still need to be offered for listeners who are fully employed. This American study suggested that while we so often focus on the elite training of the musicians, we should also pay more attention to the musical training of the audience, and of future audiences. Some seventy-four per cent of those attending concerts had learned to play an instrument or to sing.

What this most comprehensive study shows is that the orchestra is not dead, but is likely to survive best when it thinks of audiences near and far, committed and casual, real and virtual, old and young. It is clear that younger music-lovers are more spontaneous in entertainment choices, and probably have a lesser degree of loyalty to any one art form. Indeed, many, brought up in the digital age, will reject those crisp, inherited frames of the different art forms.

The report also emphasizes that the future of orchestras and their audiences depends upon music education, both generalist and elite. Perhaps, those cut-backs since the 1980s in school music education and teaching of musical instruments in most Australian states—although not here in Queensland—will be the slow time-bomb for our orchestras in the decades to come. Learning an instrument or singing does seem to be a necessary prerequisite for a committed, and paying, audience. It is not by chance that now, having received a report on our orchestras, we are awaiting a report on school music education and on elite training. Both are of vital interest to orchestras and the longer term of their futures. Yet, we do need another review: of our tertiary music schools, and how they are meeting the generalist and elite training needs for the coming decades.

### Conclusion

In an age of changed communications and transportation, the orchestra is undeniably becoming less civic-based. Like Emma-Jane of the ACO, its players will think more of taking their programme to a range of different audiences across the country or the globe, rather than just rendering that programme to a local audience. “The orchestra of the future”, wrote Norman Lebrecht last week, “will be less of an employer, more of an employment agency, supplying musicians individual or in groups to enliven or solemnise public and corporate occasions.” ([www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/060914-NL-doesntpay.html](http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/060914-NL-doesntpay.html), 14 Sept. 2005). This approach of the community—even collective—of musicians has not yet taken on in Australia in a big way, but seems more likely to do so as orchestras shed the last vestiges of connection with government bodies, and shed the last vestiges of thinking of themselves as a public servants.

Yet these orchestras are complex and fragile eco-systems, that is, if their totality is to be something more than the sum of their parts. In a managerial age, orchestral players—like university academics and teachers—risk feeling that they are not part of the organisation, when, in fact, *they are the orchestra*, not the management, the board, or the conductor, so often now recently stepped off the plane. It takes years—some estimate five years—for players fully to bond with an ensemble, and to learn the broader range of repertory with their peers. The players are not just some kind of casual, hired help, even if the formal contractual basis of their employment, as Lebrecht suggests, is likely to become more tenuous.

The eco-system of these professional orchestras extends further, to rely upon the music teachers, music students, and amateur ensembles to feed the audiences and ranks of players of the future. At a time when recording contracts for classical music have almost dried up, and yesterday’s recording back stocks are easier to recycle or remaster than ever, the necessity for performing over radio or television to all the listeners “out there” is more pressing than ever. Only through radio, web-broadcasting, or through touring, will most orchestras be able to prevent falling victim to the parochialism of their own localities.

Orchestras will always be challenged economically. Being subject to Bahmol’s Law, enough never seems to be enough. While sticking to their classical brief, they are unable to effect the efficiencies that other industries can achieve through use of new technologies or new management processes. The observation that we still need the same number of people to play Beethoven’s Fifth as we did one hundred years ago, lies at the heart of this Law (James Surowiecki, “What Ails Us”, *The New Yorker*, 7 July 2003). You can cut the cost by paying the players less, but then you are likely simply to sacrifice quality, and, with that, eventually sacrifice box office, artistic credibility, sponsorship and government funding.

Yet, when the ineluctable necessity of Bahmol’s Law is stated, I do wonder: do we have to keep on playing Beethoven’s Fifth, and in this same way? (In fact, Beethoven often had many fewer players when his works were first performed than we tend to play them with today.) And must we stick, at the heart of the classical orchestra, with this concept of instrumental authenticity and immutability of original instrumentations? Maybe insisting on ten, sixteen, twenty-two violins or twenty-eight violins *is* just inefficient, or sometimes an indulgent luxury. I think it is here that Andy Arthurs’ new project on “the twenty-first-century orchestra” is truly significant. Through encouraging a rethinking of repertory, audiences, musical relationships, the orchestra itself, and its use of technology, this study seems to me to be probing important ways that orchestras might, or perhaps, must, move in the years to come. I look forward to some of the trials planned for the next Brisbane Festival.

What, then, are the orchestras we need? Well, they are professional orchestras of excellence in performance standard, of sound economics, providing fine entertainment and, through education, fostering another generation of listeners. And these professional orchestras will only be successful when they connect with and build upon the activities of regional, youth, amateur and specialist ensembles across the land.

This was the Fourth Annual Address, Music Council of Australia, given in Brisbane on 25 September 2005

**Malcolm Gillies** is President of the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and a deputy vice-chancellor at The Australian National University. He is Chair of the contemporary-music ensemble Elision, Chair of the Australian Youth Orchestra, and was a member of the recent Federal Review of Orchestras. For many years he was a music critic for *The Australian*.