



STEEL CITY STRINGS

"Experience the Energy"

AUDIENCE SURVEY

SYMPHONIC SOUNDS

15, 21 and 22 September 2019





The survey was completed by 106 audience members

Q1. How did you hear about the Symphonic Sounds concert series?

Responses	Number of responses
I'm a Steel City Strings season subscriber	35
Saw a flier	25
Word of mouth	20
Saw The Passion of Music documentary	16
SCS social media	14
SCS website	11
Saw a poster	5
"What's On" website	5
Saw a Cinema ad	3
Heard about it on local radio	2
Other (mostly received an email, or had attended previous concerts)	16

Q2. Which concert did you attend?

Responses	Number of responses
Chevalier Performing Arts Centre	30
St Francis Xavier Cathedral	52
Nowra School of Arts	24

Comments:

Chevalier Performing Arts Centre:

A minority praised the tiered seating, the acoustics, and the easy accessibility. However, most comments were critical, specifically:

- the acoustic was described as poor, dead, dry, and flat, or more colourfully "drier than a camel's tonsils five days out of Baghdad". There was a strong plea to use an alternative venue, or to rip up the carpet, remove the curtains at the back of the stage, and install a wooden floor

- a hazardous environment for older patrons, a "dangerous obstacle course for the unwary and the unstable", because of steep steps with no handrail

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- the hot, stuffy atmosphere without air conditioning that resulted in at least one patron having to leave the auditorium to recover, supported by a family member
 - the small, narrow seats are uncomfortable and mean that upper legs cannot relax.

St Francis Xavier Cathedral:

While there was some praise for the “beautiful venue” and good acoustic, the hard pews were a major drawback to many people’s enjoyment, coupled with poor visibility of the orchestra. Some people also found the constantly changing lights a distraction.

Nowra School of Arts:

Most Nowra patrons were appreciative of the “wonderful and beautifully maintained hall with a positive sound clarity”. The easy parking and the afternoon tea refreshments were also praised.

Q3. Have you attended previous Steel City Strings concerts?

58 respondents (55%) had attended two or more Steel City Strings concerts, a further 15 (14%) had attended one, and for 33 (31%) this was their first time.

Q4. How would you rate your overall enjoyment of the music played in Symphonic Sounds?

All but one person with mixed feelings found the music highly enjoyable (78%) or enjoyable (21%).

Of the 39 people who commented, the most frequent comments were along the lines of “ Wonderful program that was well executed ... Anna de Silva Chen was fantastic! A privilege to hear ... Anna de Silva Chen was superb, the most amazing effort we have seen, she would not have been so superb without a professional musical setting like Steel City Strings ... Anna da Silva Chen... pure joy for us to watch and listen. Steel City Strings what talent you have. Such joy ... Solo violinist performance exceptional. Also conductor energy so appreciated ... musicians are very passionate about the role they play ... This was absolutely astonishing music-making!”

Several people mentioned they didn’t enjoy Paul Stanhope’s Morning Star for String Orchestra as much as the other pieces on the program.



Q5. How would you rate the standard of playing by Steel City Strings orchestra?

Standard of playing was rated Excellent (71%), High (22%) or Good (6%), with one person giving a Fair rating.

Comments by 25 respondents included "I'm always impressed by the high standard - hard to believe it's not a professional orchestra ... Really outstanding in every way ... So committed and professional ... I was taken away to a different place where the music encompassed me ... The violinist was brilliant, the Beethoven was the best, but the playing of the orchestra was impressive in both that and Mozart ... I would like to see the musicians smile more. I guess they are tired after a performance but it would be nice to at least look like they enjoyed themselves. The lead violinist is always smiling though."

After winning the AMCOS/APRA Award for Excellence in a Region we decided to ask our regional audiences what keeps them coming back and recommending Steel City Strings to their friends. We gave them a series of statements to which they could agree – or not. Here are the results.

Q6. Check the statements with which you agree.

Statement	% agreeing
The concert was good value for money	84
The concert was well produced and presented	81
The concert was absorbing and held my attention	72
The concert moved and inspired me	65

Q7. Check the statements with which you agree.

Statement	% agreeing
Steel City Strings provides an important addition to the cultural life of the area	84
These concerts help me to enjoy a greater quality of life	68
The concert gave me the opportunity to access cultural activities	57
The concert helped me feel part of the community	38



Q8. How likely are you to attend future Steel City Strings concerts?

Most people said highly (87%) or fairly (11%) likely. Two respondents were unsure, one saying "I'll think twice about the venue".

Q9. How likely are you to recommend Steel City Strings concerts to a friend?

Most people said highly (85%) or fairly (14%) likely. One person said fairly unlikely: "Next year's program is very disappointing - mainly contemporary music possibly some modern and nearly all Australian - not my kind of music".

Q10. Is there anything you would change to make the concert experience more enjoyable for you? Or have you any other comments?

A number of people reiterated their criticisms in other questions but the comments were overwhelmingly positive.

Great music, good to have a local orchestra playing around the area. What talent ... I really enjoy the addition of instruments in addition to the violins ... No changes needed. It is great having them in Nowra! ... Loved the afternoon tea afterwards. Thank you for a wonderful afternoon ... Please consider increasing the number of concerts per year ... More of the same standard of presentation, being able to access Programs on line is good, the brief notes about next year's concerts shows some good variety of what the Strings can present from the classical repertoire ... Continue to fill the air with music ... A bit more information/history/ explanation about the pieces being played. For someone with no background in classical music I'd love to learn more about the music to which I'm listening ... A wonderful evening of beautiful music with an astounding young violinist ... Keep going! Maybe other venues in Wollongong where players more visible ... Keep coming to the Southern Highlands please ... I'm so appreciative that I don't have to travel far for Steel City Strings' excellent concerts. Great venue, and great time slot - suits me to a T! Thank you all for all your hard work. You're ALL amazing and wonderful!

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