



STEEL CITY STRINGS

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending
31 December 2021

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGY



ABN 29 940 633 839

Experience The Energy



PATRON

Andrew Ford OAM



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The mission of Steel City Strings is to enrich the diverse communities of the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands with the transformative power of live music.

ARTISTIC VISION

Steel City Strings seeks to share our passion for music with, and foster love of music in, the broader community. Music resonates with the heart and profoundly influences the growth and expression of human experience.

We will be a source of inspiring music across our region – nourishing the spirit of the community with music that speaks to, and sometimes for, a broad range of audience.

This means we need to be versatile as we strive for artistic excellence and diversity in genre, programming, collaboration, audience, and musicianship.

The musical family that is Steel City Strings must be nurtured and supported to grow professionally through exposure to the expertise of conductors, soloists and composers. We will grow the musical family by supporting talented local young musicians and local composers to ensure sustainability and maintain relevance.

Each season embarks on a musical adventure, where orchestra and audiences together are challenged by traditional classics, intrigued by relevant Australian works, stretched by demanding chamber works and dazzled by new/original works.



With the worst of the pandemic now behind us, it is terrific to look forward to the return of live performances of the programs cancelled in 2021.

The arts sector has arguably weathered the worst of the economic carnage wrought by COVID, and that's why it is more important than ever for each of us to consider what we can do, at an individual or business level, to provide financial assistance.

Our Board has been focused on supporting the players and management of Steel City Strings to do their great work by providing a sound governance body to guide decision-making and strategy, and the benefit of our diverse experiences from many fields of endeavour.

But it is the players and management that make it all happen, and for that we have to thank Kyle Little, Lyndall Fowler, Yve Repin OAM, and Jeremy Boulton, whom we are saddened to lose to a bright career gracing the stages of Europe and who brought significant organisational and marketing expertise to the enterprise.

We are very keen to ensure that Steel City Strings remains of the community, for the community, which is why we aim to reflect the region's diversity in all that we do. This also means a connection with you, our audiences and supporters so if you ever have any ideas or feedback please don't hesitate to contact me.

Adam Zarth, President



This year has been an abnormal one due to a variety of COVID 19 restrictions and lockdowns. Steel City Strings has still been able to perform in some part in 2021.

Composer in the Room was a very exciting and successful concert series, featuring works by all Australian composers, including Moya Henderson, Ann-Carr Boyd, Matthew Hindson and our patron Andrew Ford. Steel City Strings was delighted to have our very first major work commissioned for us by long time supporter of the ensemble, Sue Kirby: the work Cinque Forme D'Amore by celebrated composer Elena Kats-Chernin. Both the orchestra members and audience thoroughly enjoyed this work.

Celebration of Youth was the second concert scheduled for our 2021 season. This concert featured a number of very talented soloists from the Illawarra region, including Hana Lee (violin), Tomas Phillips (clarinet), Daisy Pring (vocals) and Elliott Winn (violin). Steel City Strings also ran its very first Youth Composition Competition, where we received over 25 entries. The winner of the competition, Adriel Sukumar, had his composition Recovery performed by SCS in the concert series. This concert also featured a number of senior members of Blue Scope Youth Orchestra where they performed alongside SCS members under the baton of Shilong Ye.

Alas, on the day of the Wollongong Celebration of Youth concert, the Premier of New South Wales announced that a major portion of New South Wales was going into COVID lockdown, including Wollongong and Nowra. This meant that the remaining concerts needed to be cancelled. This was quite disappointing for our young soloists and composer who were gearing up to perform for their friends and family members in Wollongong. It is the hope that SCS will be able to feature these items again in Wollongong in 2022 as part of the Wollongong Conservatorium 50th Anniversary Concert.

As COVID restrictions and lockdowns were maintained throughout the remainder of 2021, the rest of the 2021 concert series needed to be postponed. These included Earth Connections featuring William Barton and an all-Baroque performance. This was very difficult for our fellow musicians and ensemble, who did not get to practise and perform together for months. To help mitigate the financial loss, efforts were put in place to help sell our virtual shows and keep our ensemble in the public eye.

Although this was not an ideal year, I would like to thank conductor Shilong Ye for leading the ensemble. I would also like to thank the SCS board and SCS Management committee for helping our ensemble get through this year intact. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all supporters of SCS during this difficult year.

We are all looking forward to the wonderful concerts being put on next year and the return of music to the greater community.

Kyle Little, Artistic Director

Refer 5. Manager's report. With 8 out of 12 concerts planned for 2021 cancelled, Steel City Strings relied heavily on digital offerings for its earned revenue. It was a very successful year however for winning a range of grants, including some compensation for concerts cancelled due to COVID lockdowns. Consequently we finished the year with \$16,408 profit, and we are well equipped financially to grow and professionalise our administrative team in 2022.

The financial report and the auditor's 2021 report are available on application.

Ben Twyford, Treasurer



While 2021 initially promised to be a bumper year for Steel City Strings (SCS) with four innovative programs performed over twelve concerts across our region, we were held back once again by COVID-19 restrictions caused by the Delta outbreak. We managed to perform just four concerts in 2021 – three concerts as part of our The Composer is in the Room program and one Celebration of Youth concert before lockdown intervened. Our Earth Connections and Seasons programs were postponed into our 2022 season – both originally concerts for 2020.

As a result, SCS was forced back online to update and promote our revised Digital Subscription product which we discounted heavily for our supporters. SCS ran a small marketing campaign to keep audiences engaged, also by including a recording by Tony Williams from Four Donkey films of The Composer is in the Room.

While unable to perform, SCS embarked on a string of grant applications, many of which were successful. Successful applications in 2021 included Annual Funding from Create NSW of \$60,000 for our 2022 Season, \$29,150 to commission a new Australian percussion work, and \$3277 Wollongong City Council funding for Digital Content and Marketing, to access marketing advice and digital content recording from local suppliers. In addition, a Create NSW grant of \$12,528 as compensation for concerts cancelled at the Wollongong Town Hall was facilitated by Illawarra Performing Arts Centre.

Arts organisations in Australia are advised by peak arts and not-for-profit (NFP) bodies to secure their annual revenues from one third government grants, one third ticket sales and one third private donors. Like numerous other arts organisations, SCS noticed its vulnerability, particularly during the pandemic where revenues slumped, as 50% of revenue in 2019 had come from ticket sales alone. Looking ahead, annual funding secured from Create NSW will strengthen Steel City Strings' administrative capacity by recruiting a Business Development Manager in 2022, as well as maintaining a manager position for the organisation into the future.

The new Business Development Manager will help facilitate growth in the philanthropic capacity of SCS and improve relationships with private sector firms, individual donors as well as community stakeholders. Enhancing this capacity will not only improve the organisation's resilience to economic downturns, but also help to give more autonomy to SCS over choice of repertoire and where it performs to best serve its audience. The role will also be responsible for overseeing grant applications, continuing to diversify SCS' revenue streams in the short to medium term.

On a personal note, it has been an immense pleasure working for this fine organisation. April 2022 will mark the end of my time working as Manager of Steel City Strings since beginning in August 2020. SCS will find a new manager to take over my role into the future, which will involve a small restructure of individual responsibilities. I wish SCS all the best for a successful future as it consolidates its position in the regional NSW fine arts space.

Jeremy Boulton, Manager



A1 CORPORATE INFORMATION



REGISTERED OFFICE: 23 Railway Parade, Woonona, NSW 2517

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

New Steel City Strings was registered as an incorporated association in New South Wales under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* on 14 January 2015. It is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.

2021 Board of Directors:

PRESIDENT: Adam Zarth
TREASURER: Ben Twyford
SECRETARY: James Welch
MEMBERS: Dr. Melissa Thompson
Anthony Body
Vivien Twyford
Kyle Little (Steel City Strings Artistic Director)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Lyndall Fowler

Day-to-day management was the responsibility of the **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** comprising volunteers Yve Repin OAM, Lyndall Fowler, Kyle Little and Karella Mitchell, led by contracted Manager Jeremy Boulton

PATRON: Andrew Ford, OAM, Australian composer and ABC broadcaster, resident in Southern Highlands.

ACCOUNTANT: Irene Latoa CPA, First Class Accounts
PO Box 1639 Wollongong DC NSW 5000

AUDITORS: Delyse Del Turco BCom CPA, Better Business Accounting
368 Princes Highway Woonona NSW 2517

A3 VOLUNTEERS IN 2021

Alison Antonio
John Bowen & family
Julia Le & family
Roger Lyle
Julie McDonald
Michele Moore
Ruth Procter
David Vance (program notes)

A2 PLAYERS IN 2021

GUEST CONDUCTOR Shilong Ye

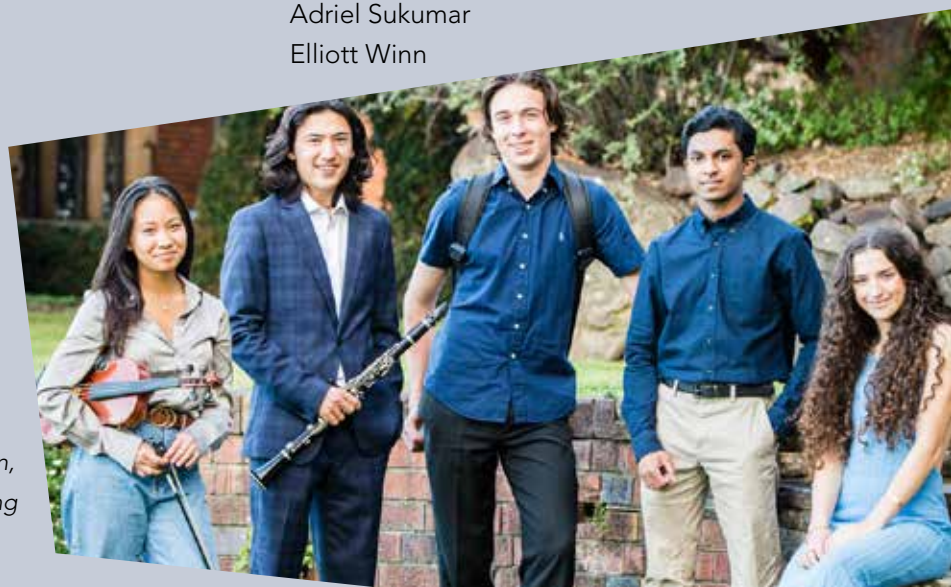
CONCERTMASTER Kyle Little

STEEL CITY STRINGS MUSICIANS

Mitra Ahmadi Kate Malone
Jacob Antonio Siobhan Mewes
Catherine Barnett Karella Mitchell
Liana Bonaccorso Tani Phillips
Adrian Davis Hannah Roberts
Sara Glynn Miffy Ryan
Ethan Ireland Matthew Tsalidis
Janine Jackson David Vance
Jonathon Karanikas Rita Woolhouse
Kyle Little Monique Ziegelaar
Louisa Lovasz

GUEST ARTISTS

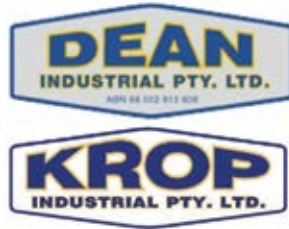
Bradley Baker
Hana Lee
Tomas Phillips
Daisy Pring
Adriel Sukumar
Elliott Winn



Left to Right: Hana Le, Tomas Phillips, Elliot Winn, Adriel Sukumar and Daisy Pring



OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS



The New South Wales Government through Create NSW