



# STEEL CITY STRINGS

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



## ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending  
31 December 2022

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.

On behalf of the board of Steel City Strings, I want to thank the talented players, volunteers and contributors that bring this orchestra to life. Each incredible concert throughout the year was a humbling experience for all of us in attendance, as a new standard was set for the performance of great music in venues across our region.

While our role as a board is to provide an appropriate level of governance, strategic advice and oversight to enable the great work of Steel City Strings, we are also among its greatest supporters. In that vein I want to thank our fellow audience members for bringing vibrancy and the colour to performances. I'd like to further thank our sponsors and subscribers for allowing Steel City Strings to thrive for another year.

Our main focus, working together with the operations team, is the sustainability of the orchestra. This comes in two key forms, with most important being sustainability of our talent. Our players are the beating heart of Steel City Strings, led so brilliantly by Kyle Little. We want to ensure that we continue to attract new talent so that they can benefit from being a part of this inspiring and gifted group. Alongside this, we are focused on maintaining the financial sustainability of Steel City Strings, to enable the orchestra to continue its work into the future and to professionalise its operations so that we make the most of the limited time of our players and volunteers.

If you find yourself wondering what more you can do to support Steel City Strings, the answer is to bring a friend, family member or colleague to their next concert. We want to continue to grow our audience and lift the profile of this great community cultural asset.

*Adam Zarth, President*



Steel City Strings has showcased another year of remarkable artistic achievements, community engagement, and musical excellence. As the Artistic Director of this esteemed ensemble, I am privileged to lead a group of incredibly talented musicians, dedicated staff, and passionate volunteers who have worked tirelessly to bring the joy of music to our community.

The past year has been one of growth and innovation for Steel City Strings. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the global pandemic, our commitment to artistic excellence remained unwavering. We adapted to the new realities and continued to create captivating musical experiences, pushing the boundaries of creativity and embracing technology to connect with our audiences in novel ways.

Our first concert of the year in 2022 "Earth Connections" was a remarkable and culturally enriching experience that showcased the diversity of Australian and German composers. The program was thoughtfully curated, featuring renowned Australian composers Peter Sculthorpe, Paul Stanhope, Stuart Greenbaum, and German-British composer Max Richter. One of the highlights of the evening was the inclusion of Indigenous performer and composer William Barton, who mesmerized the audience with his captivating works such as Didge Fusion, Petrichor, and Birdsong at Dusk. Additionally, we proudly commissioned and performed an arrangement of works by Indigenous composer Brenda Gifford, further highlighting the rich heritage of Australian music. Collaborating with local Indigenous communities made this concert a profound learning experience for the orchestra, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture and music. The dedication and effort put into this concert paid off, as it was recognised as one of Steel City Strings' most powerful and memorable performances to date.

Our second concert titled "Seasons" was a breathtaking display of musical artistry and collaboration. The highlight of the evening was the sensational performance by celebrated violinist Emily Sun, whose virtuosity mesmerized the audience as she flawlessly rendered Max Richter's stunning composition, "Vivaldi Reimagined". It was a transformative experience for the orchestra, as they had the privilege of working alongside such a well-versed and supportive soloist, gaining invaluable insights and honing their craft. The concert further showcased the brilliance of Australian composer Graham Koehne, whose works added a touch of contemporary flair to the program. The Concerto

Grosso by Vivaldi, a timeless masterpiece, brought a sense of classical grandeur to the performance. Under the baton of Elizabeth Scott, the concert was brought to life with meticulous attention to detail and a nurturing approach during rehearsals and performances. The collaboration between Emily Sun, the orchestra, and conductor Elizabeth Scott created an unforgettable musical experience that resonated with audiences.

The "Women in Steel" concert series brought forth a powerful and captivating program that celebrated the cultural history of women in the Illawarra Steel Industry. Steel City Strings embarked on an ambitious project by commissioning a percussion concerto by composer Natalie Williams, aimed at capturing and sharing the stories of the remarkable women who worked in the steel industry. The extraordinary percussionist Claire Edwardes took center stage, dazzling audiences with her mastery of a wide range of percussion instruments, breathing life into the concerto and bringing forth the voices of these resilient women. The concert also featured works by Eastern-European composers Dragan Supalevski, Aleksandra Vrebalov, Pavle Popović, and the renowned Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich. Each composition added its unique flavor to the program, showcasing the depth and diversity of music from these regions. 'Women in Steel' was a poignant and evocative concert experience that shed light on the strength and contributions of women in the steel industry, leaving a lasting impact on both the performers and the audience.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the individuals and organisations who have played a vital role in the success and growth of Steel City Strings. First and foremost, we would like to thank conductors Luke Spicer and Elizabeth Scott for their exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to the ensemble. We are also immensely grateful to the Wollongong Conservatorium for their ongoing support, providing us with a rehearsal space that has become our creative sanctuary. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to our corporate sponsors and generous donors, whose invaluable support has enabled us to bring our music to life and pursue artistic excellence. Lastly, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our audience members, whose unwavering support and enthusiasm fuel our passion and drive. We are truly honored and grateful for the collective support we receive, which has been instrumental in our journey as an ensemble.

*Kyle Little, Artistic Director*



It was good to see the back of Covid-19 restrictions in 2022 so Steel City Strings could get on with delivering three concerts this year. All three concerts, planned for earlier years, had received individual project grants to subsidise performances. CreateNSW also provided an operational grant of \$60,000 which helps fund increased administration support.

Due to 2022 being a post-pandemic recovery year Steel City ticket sales increased from \$19,588 the prior year to \$58,990 from the 8 separate performances held.

Donations for the year were also higher than in previous years. The grant for the performance of "Women in Steel" was a matching grant of \$15,000 from Creative Partnerships Australia that required Steel City Strings to raise a similar amount. Business Development Manager Anne Hinchliffe led a donations campaign successfully raising over \$17,000 from Steel City Strings' supporters.

Staff changes in the year had both positive and negative impacts on the financial position. A Business Development manager was recruited early in 2022 to focus on audience development and grant applications.

However, the Operations Manager at the time Jeremy Boulton, who supported the orchestra throughout the pandemic years, resigned to focus on his singing career. A new Operations Manager was recruited in July but has since left the organisation. Staff costs increased and this increase was offset by the CreateNSW grant noted above.

Total Assets grew from \$103,725 in 2021 to \$113,822 in 2022. Recognition of deferred grant income as revenue has led to a decrease in liabilities of \$49,407. Due to the items listed above Net Equity grew to \$104,132 by the end of 2022 calendar year.

2023 has some challenges ahead with a new Operations Manager to be recruited as well as potentially new Directors to increase the skill level across the board.

*Ben Twyford, Treasurer*





## PROGRAMS

2022 has been a catch-up year in which we presented programs cancelled over 2020 and 2021 due to COVID lockdowns. This proved a challenging logistical exercise, as our soloists were also returning and rapidly filling their schedules with catch-up national and international bookings.

Our first performance "Earth Connections" in May featured didgeridoo artist William Barton performing his own compositions in a program of mainly Australian compositions. The theme was our connection with the natural environment, including birds, clouds, sea, sky, footprints and the earth itself, accompanied by images provided by Four Donkey Films.

"Seasons" in August featured violinist Emily Sun in Max Richter's reimagining of Antonio Vivaldi's "Four Seasons". It was also an opportunity for three orchestra members (Kyle Little, Jacob Antonio and Matthew Tsalidis) to showcase their own talents in two concertos by Vivaldi.

In November "Women in Steel" premiered a new work, "Steeling Fire", commissioned by Steel City Strings, by Australian composer Natalie Williams, and featuring guest soloist percussionist Claire Edwardes. "Women in Steel" honours the tenacity of women in the Illawarra who changed Australia's industrial laws in the 1980s/90s, celebrated in the Illawarra filmmaker, Robynne Murphy's award-winning documentary, "Women of Steel".



## PEOPLE

Steel City Strings won Create NSW annual funding for 2022, enabling us to employ contractors for business development to attract further funding and operations management to improve internal and external communications systems.

Jeremy Boulton, who so effectively kept Steel City Strings audiences engaged through the COVID years with digital offerings, left us in April to pursue his own career as an operatic baritone in Europe. He ensured that our 2022 season was successfully launched before departing for which we are grateful.

Ann Hinchliffe joined us in April as Business Development Manager. Ann was extremely effective in attracting funding from Create NSW for future projects, conducted a highly effective fundraiser through the Australian Cultural Fund platform with support of Creative Partnerships Australia Plus 1 grants program, and secured annual funding for Steel City Strings for 2023, as well as a number of smaller grants. Ann left Steel City Strings in October for family reasons but remains connected for casual contract work.

An Operations Manager Josh Reid was employed in July to improve internal and external communication systems.

## SUPPORT

Thanks to our audience members and subscribers who stayed with us during COVID for our digital offerings and returned to our concert halls in force in 2022 for a successful season.

Thanks to the continuing support of our sponsors: Rob Newman of South Coast Equipment Group, Geoff O'Donnell of Shin Investments, Ernest and Dana Dupere of Benedict Recycling, Bernie Dean of Dean Industrial and Krop Industrial, David Sharpe of Sharpe Advisory for submission writing support, and David Francis of Wollongong Conservatorium for rehearsal facilities.

Finally, thanks to our volunteers who rally around performances to provide program notes, catering, leafletting, venue management, box office, flower arrangements, as well as ongoing behind-the-scenes administration, e.g. executive officer to the Board, community liaison and financial management.

*Lyndall Fowler and Yve Repin*  
(volunteers)

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.

#### 2022 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 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE comprising Yve Repin, Lyndall Fowler, Kyle Little and Karella Mitchell, chaired August-December by contracted Operations Manager Josh Reid.

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

## A3 VOLUNTEERS IN 2022

Alison Antonio  
 John & Jacqui Bowen & family  
 Ann Brown  
 Lyndall Fowler  
 Julia Le  
 Meg Lloyd  
 Roger Lyle  
 Julie McDonald  
 Michele Moore  
 Ruth Procter  
 Yve Repin  
 David Vance (program notes)

## A2 PLAYERS IN 2022

CONDUCTORS: Luke Spicer, Elizabeth Scott

CONCERTMASTER: Kyle Little

#### STEEL CITY STRINGS MUSICIANS:

Mitra Ahmadi	Sam Malone
Jacob Antonio	Monique Mezzatesta
Catherine Barnett	Karella Mitchell
Samantha Boston	Tanya Phillips
Adrian Davis	Kathleen Quinn
Alexandra Dening	Renee Richardson
Anna Hewgill	Hannah Roberts
Ethan Ireland	Miffy Ryan
Janine Jackson	Tim Talbot
Jo Landstra	Matthew Tsalidis
Kyle Little	David Vance
Louisa Lovasz	Rita Woolhouse
Kate Malone	Monique Ziegelaar

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

GUEST ARTISTS: William Barton

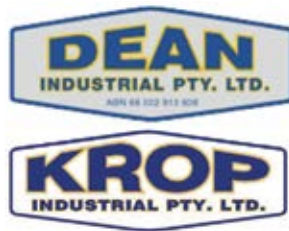
Blue Robinson

Emily Sun

Claire Edwardes



OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS



The New South Wales Government through CreateNSW