

The company believes in providing young people with brilliant creative opportunities regardless of their geographical limitations.

Sarah McCormack, General Manager, Stompin Youth Dance Company



Stompin Youth Dance Company's tour of **SYNC** in Tasmania was an incomparable experience for young performers to tour regionally and inspired youth-driven activities wherever it toured.

'**Pardar Kerkar Noh Erpei**' **Catching a Future** was an exhibition of works by school children from the Darnley Island State School in the Torres Strait, where a new cross-curriculum art focus is dramatically raising literacy levels.

Drama Wild project, in Western Australia, allowed young people to break down barriers of cultural understanding through an intensive performing arts experience.

Rope Story project from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in South Australia enabled young Anangu people to explore cultural knowledge with their elders, leading to healthier lifestyles and increased self-esteem.

Skudda Arts Powerhouse program provided opportunities to youth at risk in Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia through a flexible and mobile arts program.

Young Australian Concert Artists program is supporting young musicians in regional areas where there is high demand for music training and professional development.

twwo

A springboard for young people

SYNC

Stompin Youth Dance Company



Launceston's Stompin Youth Dance Company prides itself on being young, bold and hard-working. When SYNC toured Tasmania during the Ten Days on the Island festival in 2003 it made a huge splash—quite literally—with regional audiences of all ages.

SYNC grew from a previous Stompin Youth Dance Company work, *Joyride*, which was performed in the pool at Launceston's swimming centre. Artistic directors Luke George and Bec Reid's love of MGM classic films led them to think about the cross-overs between art and sport in 'SYNChronised' swimming and they were keen to develop another work for swimming pools; public places frequented and favoured by young people.

The cast of 16 performers, aged between 15 and 20, first rehearsed as a single group in Launceston. To facilitate the tour and to accommodate the young performers' commitments to study, jobs and families, the cast split into two groups. Each group learnt the whole show. Stompin travelled in two groups to eight towns for 10 performances of SYNC in only 10 days. The show went to Queenstown, Huonville, Oatlands, St Marys, Scottsdale, George Town, Campbell Town and Smithton.

Project development involved Luke and Bec making site visits to each community, and particularly the swimming pool and local schools. A central aim of this project was to strengthen connections between the dance company and the young people in each locality and this was achieved by

encouraging youth participation at each performance. School students and youth groups from each of the eight tour locations were invited to provide pre-show entertainment. When audiences arrived at their local pool they were met by local young people who might be playing in a band, cooking a barbeque, or working as ushers. This created a special atmosphere prior to each performance, building a sense of local ownership of the event. It also created an opportunity for young people to be seen in a public context which they had chosen and created.

'There's a beautiful, cyclical model in place where young people come in and out of the company in different capacities bringing their experiences as young professional artists back to Tasmania.'

SYNC opens slowly with a lazy, summer holiday feeling, including playful teenage flirtations. It builds into a synchronised swimming routine which pays homage to 1950s films starring Esther Williams. It ends with a wild scene of thrashing water, the pool resembling a watery mosh pit.



Top: Dancers: Melita Gul, Tara Boyd, Rachel Taylor, Jenna French, Mark Brazendale, Immogen Ryan, Chelsea Billett and Janita Foley

Bottom: Dancers: Immogen Ryan, Bec Livermore, Pip Griggs and Josh Smith

Top Right: Gemma Gray, Cassie Anderson, Mark Brazendale and Rachel Taylor

Bottom Right: various dancers

Photography: Mark Webster



The tour was made possible through the generosity of local communities and regional councils who provided free accommodation for the entire cast and crew. The team would arrive in town with a mini-bus driven by the tour manager and a technician's truck. They would bump in (that is, set up) the show, rehearse the dances in the water, do the show, pack it up and head off to the local scout hall, classroom or teacher residency house where they'd roll out sleeping bags and swags. Stompin also negotiated with councils to provide out-of-season maintenance of swimming pools in each location, with staff such as life-guards, electricians and pool managers supporting each performance.



Stompin offers an open invitation to young people not necessarily trained as dancers but who are into youth culture—music, dance and performance. Every year the company holds auditions which attract young people aged 14–25. All those who pass through the company are encouraged to retain their strong ties. For example, the costumes for *SYNC* were designed by Katie Stackhouse, a former member of Stompin who returned to Launceston after studying costume design overseas. As Bec expresses it: 'There's a beautiful, cyclical model in place where young people come in and out of the company in different capacities bringing their experiences as young professional artists back to Tasmania.'

Each year Stompin Youth creates site-specific works, often outdoors, which are accessible to all young people and their experiences. The company is producing a new site-specific work for 2004, *Age of Consent*, about young people's relationship to law and authority and its impact on their lives.



Funding/support: *SYNC* was supported with funding from Ten Days on the Island. Stompin Youth Dance Company receives annual funding through the Australia Council's Dance Board (Key Organisations) and Arts Tasmania (recurrent funding).

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'Pardar Kerkar Noh Erpei' Catching a Future

Cairns Regional Gallery

'I am 11 years old and I live at Dadamud Village, Darnley Island. I painted the tiger shark because it is scary and the squid because I like to catch them and eat them.' Morgan Waiganna is one of a group of children from a remote island in the Torres Strait who was part of a student exhibition at Cairns Regional Gallery. For Morgan and his classmates, art became an avenue to literacy and expanded life opportunities.

Darnley Island is a small volcanic island 100 kilometres from Papua New Guinea and 180 kilometres north east of Thursday Island. Simply to get to Darnley Island from Cairns requires one day's flight in a light plane. Discussions between Darnley Island State School staff and the 360-strong island community about their vision for the school and the children's futures led to a long-term plan called Catching a Future.

'I am 10 years old. I live at Mogor Village on Darnley Island in the Torres Strait. I have painted a coral trout and a mantaray because they look so beautiful when they swim.'



Darnley Islanders maintain a rich cultural and spiritual heritage particularly linked to the sea, together with strong family ties. But most adults are employed through a work for the dole scheme (Community Development Employment Program). Catching a Future was designed to secure a more diverse, vibrant future for all members of this community. In particular, the whole community was involved in supporting literacy initiatives at the school, and a cross-curriculum focus on art was an important part of this process.

Cairns Regional Gallery was established less than a decade ago with majority funding from local government. It runs a vibrant public education program highlighting the advantages of learning and visual awareness. Lynnette Griffiths of the Darnley Island Arts Centre visited Cairns Regional Gallery. During her meeting with the gallery's programs manager Paul Brinkman, the idea of a children's exhibition in the gallery was born. The exhibition was timed to coincide with NAIDOC Week 2003, whose theme was 'Our Children, Our Future'.

Over a five-month period in 2003, local and international visitors to the Cairns Regional Gallery viewed an exhibition of work on sea themes produced by 19 Darnley Island students aged 9–13. The exhibition consisted of ink and gouache works, wax resist and watercolour works, photographic boards, 8-foot-high wooden puppets depicting traditional dancers, and a book with computer-generated illustrations by the students. Each work was

Top: Title: *Shark and Dugong* Artist: Arthur Ketchell. Photo: Paul Brinkman

Bottom: Title: *Shark and Stingray* Artist: Kathleen Ketchell. Photo: Paul Brinkman

Right: Junior school students from Darnley Island State School with the male and female dance puppets created by Lala Gutchen. Photo: courtesy of Darnley Island State School



accompanied by statements written by the artist. 'I am 10 years old. I live at Mogor Village on Darnley Island in the Torres Strait. I have painted a coral trout and a mantaray because they look so beautiful when they swim,' wrote Beryl Ghee. Lala Gutchen, whose drawings inspired the two exhibited puppets, wrote: 'I am ten years old. I live at Green Hill Darnley Island. I drew the Erub kebi neur (small Darnley Island girl) and Erub kebi le (small Darnley Island boy) representing merba omasker or piccannini blo youmpla (small children who belong to everybody). They danced in these traditional clothes for our Native Title celebrations last year. My mum, Racy Ama and Aka Nola made the skirts and sarzee (tops) for the girls and boys out of the trunk of the banana tree.'

The main challenge in mounting the project was distance. The project relied heavily on communication by email and illustrated the huge advantage of having new technologies in remote and regional areas.

While the exhibition succeeded in its intention to introduce Indigenous culture to gallery visitors, the success of the project in the lives of the Darnley Island community has also been substantial. It was a source of wonder and pride for the children to see their artworks carefully packed into modular containers and then stacked on board the weekly barge, bound for the walls of the Cairns Regional Gallery. The need to produce exhibition signage and a book for exhibition created valuable opportunities to motivate the children to higher literacy levels in standard Australian English.



Two children travelled to Cairns to attend the 'Catching a Future' exhibition which was opened by nationally recognised Torres Strait Islander artist, Ken Thaiday. The children returned to Darnley Island with stories to share about this famous Islander who earns his living as an artist, and this, in turn, introduced the children to the possibility of a career in the arts. A presentation made at the Cairns Gallery by art teacher Lynnette Griffiths was attended by about 40 people, many of them regional school teachers who were uplifted by the Darnley Island model of arts education as a key element of strategic planning in remote communities.

Now the Queensland Government has provided \$250,000 to fund the Darnley Island Arts Centre. The centre will link the art and cultural initiatives of the school with the broader community, and provide future employment possibilities for secondary and tertiary school leavers when they return to their island home. Catching a Future showed how an art and education project may be used to achieve a broader strategic business plan. And it highlights the benefits that can be achieved by close collaboration between regional arts centres.

Funding/support: This project was fully financed by passionate individuals with the assistance of the Cairns Regional Gallery's Public Programs and the Darnley Island community.

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Drama Wild

Karratha Youth Theatre and Freefall Theatre

When two youth theatre companies in Karratha and Kalgoorlie—located about 2400 kilometres apart in Western Australia—decided to collaborate on the Drama Wild performing arts project in May 2003, Geraldton was the obvious half-way point. Drama Wild brought 60 young people (13–18 years) to join a live-away-from-home project aiming for intensive concentration on arts skill development, exposure to professional performing artists, networking with other young people and valuable workshops in leadership and cultural communication.

Drama Wild was conceived by Robyn Barrett (Karratha Youth Theatre) and Sandy Oxenburg (Freefall Theatre) to offer performance skills to young people living in isolated communities, where they rarely get the opportunity to engage in youth arts activities. The organisers could also see the need to bridge the cultural chasm which can separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth by bringing them together to learn, have fun and exchange ideas. The participants came from diverse backgrounds: boarding schools because their families live in remote settings; foster families; and about one quarter of them were Aboriginal youth. Not all of these came from the same Aboriginal language or culture groups, however, so these young people were also exchanging information about their inter-cultural differences.

The intensive week of performing arts training was delivered by professional tutors from Karratha Youth Theatre and Freefall Theatre with help from local, Mid West



and Perth artists. Outdoors under the trees or inside the Bluff Point Camp School, a training program took shape which rotated four groups of participants between six tutors who taught them juggling, stilt walking, diabolo, group formations, choreography, fire twirling and Capoeira (Brazilian dance and fighting style), hip hop dance, costume making, acting, and contemporary Aboriginal dance and storytelling.

The aim was to take young people out of their usual comfort zones, get them moving, encourage them to make new bonds and new friends. The organisers were interested in assisting the students to develop personal confidence through the acquisition of arts skills and to develop trust through teamwork, such as acrobatic manoeuvres. The participants discovered new ease in communication as they talked and related to young people from other cultures. They revelled in this opportunity to immerse themselves in an intense experience which was fun, challenging, and broke through personal or physical performance barriers. Even boys who were very shy about dancing got up on their feet in no time.

Participants came from the towns of Geraldton, Mullewa, Wandalgu, Karratha, Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Coolgardie, and were sponsored by: Partnerships for Success Program (after school care for Aboriginal students) in the Pilbara and Goldfields region; the Youth Centre and Christian Brothers Agricultural College at Mullawa; the Wandalgu boarding school for Aboriginal students;

Above: workshop
Top Right: main street performance
Bottom Right: main street performance
Photography: Robyn Barrett



Creative Works Youth Theatre Company; and the Arts and Cultural Development Council in the Mid West. Participating organisations had input into the design of the project and paid a \$50 participation fee for each student. They nominated between four to eight young people to attend and sent one representative to the camp to offer personal support, supervision and guidance.

Practical support for the Drama Wild project was demonstrated by Job Futures, Karratha, whose mini-bus transported Pilbara participants to the campsite. Participants from the Goldfields obtained discounted Qantas airfares, and the Mullewa Shire Council also helped transport participants to the camp venue.



Meanwhile, the parents of participants from the town of Geraldton expressed such disappointment at their exclusion—on the basis of age—from this exuberant program, that Cerrie Beech, coordinator of the 'Geraldton Sunshine Festival' for the local Arts and Cultural Development Council responded by applying for a quick-response grant for Jealous Rage, workshops in circus and performing arts for adults who want to get in on the act.

Even boys who were very shy about dancing got up on their feet in no time.

This experience has meant these young participants are now part of a new regional youth arts network, which will provide an ongoing focus for them. At the end of the week, a community performance, *Bust-a-move*, was attended by about 200 people in a venue donated by Geraldton City Council. Organisers have plans to make Drama Wild an annual, statewide event that will target WA regional youth arts organisations as participants.



Funding/support: Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council, Country Arts WA through the Regional Arts Fund, an Australian Government initiative and Country Arts WA's Community Arts Project Scheme, Office of Multicultural Interests and Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA Reconciliation Fund and Arts and Cultural Development Council of Geraldton.

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Rope Story

Ananguku Arts and Culture Aboriginal Corporation



Imagine 30 tonnes of red sand shaped by many Anangu hands into a sculpted rope 40 metres long. Now envisage this rope sculpture in the rich green surrounds of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. And finally, imagine 'WOMADelaide' festival-goers held enthralled as Anangu elders recount their stories, using the rope sculpture as an allegory for a unified life, woven together by the three strands of people (Anangu), place (Manta) and spirit (Kurunpa).

The Rope Story begins in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, which occupy an area almost the size of Ireland in the far north-west of South Australia. Young people in the APY Lands experience extreme disadvantage in an environment characterised by poor health, poor education and employment prospects and substance abuse. The Rope Story became a powerful vehicle for Anangu elders Peter Nyangu and Bernard Tjalykurin to help young people, and particularly young men, explore the difficult issues confronting them.



During one young men's camp in 2001, the elders brought their story to life with a rope sculpture carved in the earth. Whenever the story dealt with disturbing issues such as drought, contact with white people, petrol sniffing, the erosion of culture or even the impact of new technologies, the strands of the rope parted in the sand and the rope was weakened. The elders had created a powerful metaphor, and a way of encouraging young people to take pride in their culture and to strive for successful, healthy

and balanced lives. In 1994, Dora Dallwitz, a South Australian visual artist, made a rope sculpture with Anangu children at Umuwa, the administrative centre of the Lands.

In 2002 Colin Koch, coordinator of the Ananguku Arts & Culture Aboriginal Corporation, proposed that the corporation collaborate with the elders, Dora, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council and WOMADelaide to create a monumental Rope Story as a means of bringing Anangu culture and issues to a broad and sympathetic audience.

Ananguku's programs are aimed not just at improving visual and performing arts outcomes for the region but also at using contemporary art practice as a way to build community capacity and employment. The organisation—which is comprised principally of women—is especially keen to engage men and young people in activity that supports personal development and maintenance of culture. The Anangu elders well understand from a traditional perspective that art is a powerful way to pass on cultural knowledge to young people, and hope that through awareness of cultural inheritance their people will be uplifted by cultural pride rather than pulled down by lack of opportunity and disempowerment.

The process of transferring Rope Story from a private experience in the APY Lands to a public, urban environment was a challenging one. Colin Koch coordinated the logistical and fundraising arrangements. Dora Dallwitz and

Top: Preparing the sand. Wiltja secondary students compacting the damp sand with feet, hands and spades
Bottom: Carving the strands. Dora Dallwitz training Wiltja students to carve the individual strands
Top Right: Telling the story. Pitjantjatjara storytellers, Bernard Tjalkurin and Peter Nyangu with the WOMADelaide audience
Bottom Right: Telling the story. Ushma Scales interpreting for Pitjantjatjara storytellers, Bernard Tjalkurin and Peter Nyangu
Photography: John Dallwitz



her partner John worked alongside the elders to design the rope sculpture. Anangu Lands community health worker Ushma Scales was engaged to liaise with Anangu children at Adelaide's Wiltja Pitjantjatjara High School, who would participate in the project. Peter Nyangu and Bernard Tjalykurin were joined by elder Andy Tijlari to work with the Wiltja students and develop the story, with its representation of times both good and bad.

The elders had created a powerful metaphor, and a way of encouraging young people to take pride in their culture and to strive for successful, healthy and balanced lives.

Together, the elders, Wiltja students and Dora worked for three afternoons creating a 40-metre sculpture from 30 tonnes of red sand in the Adelaide Botanic Garden. In five storytelling sessions at WOMADelaide—which were not scripted and which gained new perspectives with each telling—the elders and children gathered around the sculpture to tell the graphic story of the rope to an estimated audience of 4000 people.

Rope Story was an important milestone in fostering awareness and respect for Anangu culture. It was also an opportunity to raise the self-esteem of the children involved. WOMADelaide, Australia's pre-eminent celebration of the world's cultural diversity through music, arts and dance, was a valuable stage for this project. Many who heard the Rope Story expressed their respect and support for the Anangu elders, referring to them as 'living Australian treasures'. And while the story of the rope focused on Anangu culture, those who saw and heard the Rope Story at the festival were moved to consider the interaction of these same three elements—people, place, spirit—in their own lives.

Representatives from other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities have now expressed interest in presenting the Rope Story as a means of exploring personal and communal stories with youth from other Aboriginal communities, ethnic minorities and youth 'at risk'.

The project was a landmark success and has led to the Anangu Arts and Culture Corporation forming a new committee of senior *wati* (initiated men) to help develop more art projects that address youth and men's issues.



Funding/support: WOMADelaide; Country Arts SA through the Regional Arts Fund, an Australian Government initiative; NPY Women's Council and the Ara Irititja archival project. Anangu Arts & Culture Aboriginal Corporation is supported by the Government of South Australia and Arts SA, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council and ATSIIS.

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Skudda Arts Powerhouse

Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

For Aboriginal teenagers in the town of Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia, 'skudda' means 'cool', 'excellent', 'deadly'. Skudda Arts Powerhouse is a community arts initiative which connects with teenagers by blending an arts skills development/arts education program with what teenagers perceive to be 'skudda'. It is designed to open doors to personal creativity, giving teenagers appealing options for learning and having fun, while connecting them to the wider community.

'Within five minutes they were at the door wanting to know whose music it was, whether we liked this music and what we were doing.'

Skudda Arts Powerhouse is a specifically targeted addition to the artistic support activity of Mangkaja Arts, an Aboriginal Corporation that supports Fitzroy Valley artists by providing paint and canvas and assisting with the marketing and selling of artworks. Mangkaja Arts has been operating since the mid-1980s through a small capital grant from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council. Mangkaja's Youth Arts program has been running since 2001, with the goal of providing youth throughout the entire Fitzroy Valley—a 250 kilometre radius—with the opportunity of involvement in various artforms.



After the pilot phase of Mangkaja's Youth Arts program, elders and community members expressed concerns about the wellbeing of a large group of teenagers in Fitzroy Crossing. Known as the town's 'floating population', these young people were either too old for school, didn't regularly attend school, or were short-term visitors from remote communities staying in town with extended families. This group was not being reached by the regular youth arts activities. Mangkaja Youth Arts therefore initiated the Skudda Arts Powerhouse program to engage 'at risk' youth in 2003 with funding from the ArtsWA Indigenous Arts Panel (New Projects).

After finding that a direct approach to teenagers to join Mangkaja's Youth Arts program was unsuccessful, they realised that creating the right formula to attract these teenagers to after-hours activities was not going to be easy. Organisers decided it might be more effective to provide the right conditions for them to make their own decision to join in. The opportunity came one evening when Rachel McKenzie, Mangkaja's youth arts coordinator, and Philip Maynard, a Sydney ceramic artist, were cleaning up following a regular arts workshop. A group of older teenagers, hanging out nearby were instantly attracted by Rachel's Eminem tape playing loudly.

'Within five minutes they were at the door wanting to know whose music it was, whether we liked this music and what we were doing,' remembers Rachel. *'Before they knew it we had them painting ceramic bowls as they listened to*

Top: Bracelet workshop held at the Sport & Recreational Oval, Fitzroy Crossing

Bottom: Shadow play held at Wangkatjungka community

Right: Tina Lawford and Kirsten Carter during a ceramics workshop held at 50c House in Kurnangki community, Fitzroy Crossing

Photography: courtesy of Mangkaja Arts



music. The next evening they came back earlier with their own music to play and they painted bowls again. This was our first stepping stone to get this group to join our arts program.'

What followed was a series of arts workshops tailored to interest this group, including designing and printing T-shirts, a music-making workshop using sound boards, dance workshops with a visiting African dance instructor in the sport and recreation hall for up to 45 people, and a popular jewellery workshop for teenage girls on the grass in the evening following basketball training. Shadow play performances in the remote Wangkatjunga community about 120 kilometres from Fitzroy Crossing were run in conjunction with Filipino artist, Alwin Reamillo, art and craft lecturer at Fitzroy Crossing's Karriyli Adult Education Centre.

The relationships between the youths and Mangkaja has developed to the point where teenagers now come into the Arts Centre enquiring about workshops.

When the organisers reviewed this program of arts activities, they saw that the common success factors were mobility and flexibility and the program's ability to take workshops to the teenagers, wherever they were. In their search for a more successful workshop formula for this group, Mangkaja Youth Arts has applied for and received funding from the Office of Crime Prevention for a dedicated vehicle to be their local art studio on wheels. This vehicle

will be permanently equipped with a range of art equipment which can be driven to any spot around town, or to more remote communities, for mobile arts workshops with teenagers. Mangkaja Youth Arts are also hoping for assistance from the local Aboriginal Police Liaison Unit for this initiative.

Fitzroy Crossing can be a hot, dry, dusty place without possibilities for the kinds of interaction city teenagers take for granted. Skudda Arts Powerhouse is proving to young people in Fitzroy Crossing that they're talented and creative and it's helping them to get in touch with art forms they might only see on television. In a town where a movie may be screened in the hall only once a month, Skudda Arts has a lot to offer.



Funding/support: Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council, artsWA, Office of Crime Prevention, Department of Premier and Cabinet WA, and many local organisations who helped by allowing workshops to be held on their premises.

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Young Australian Concert Artists

Australian Youth Orchestra



'I was unsure in what direction I was heading with my future studies. I really enjoyed playing, but thought there must be thousands of better French horn players out there. The most important thing I got out of these weekends was the self-motivation and confidence in myself and in my playing.' Melanie Brodie, a Year 12 music student from Warrnambool, sums up the benefits of the Australian Youth Orchestra's (AYO) Young Australian Concert Artists program, which targets professional support to music teachers and students in regional communities.

Since 1948, the AYO's national touring music programs have benefited more than 10,000 people across Australia. The AYO has encouraged many talented young musicians to reach their musical potential and a number have gone on to become stars in the music world.

In 1999, the pilot program of Young Australian Concert Artists was inaugurated to address the specific issues facing regional students, particularly their geographic isolation and subsequent lack of exposure to musical culture. Students often need to drive—or be driven—long distances to attend music lessons or to gain access to resources such as musical equipment or specialised workshops.

Young Australian Concert Artists was conceived as a direct result of AYO's research and discussion with music education officers of the Sydney Symphony; Musica Viva in Schools; and the Sydney Conservatorium's Access

Program. By collaborating with these peak organisations, AYO ensures the best use of available resources and creative opportunities.

The Young Australian Concert Artists program also takes into account the history, tastes and style of music education in each community and provides tutors and AYO ensembles to suit. 'Each town has its own musical personality which has been built through its teachers and students and our program responds to that,' says Alison Harbert, assistant artistic administrator of the Young Australian Concert Artists program. 'We give them a shell of what we can do and how we'd like to structure the program, but they share artistic responsibility for the program.'

The touring program unites three types of musicians: an ensemble of Australian Youth Orchestra members drawn from annual, national auditions of Australia's most talented young musicians; the program tutors, who are experienced, leading musical professionals drawn from major symphony orchestras across Australia; and the regional program participants who are young artists and teachers from the local community.

In Stage 1 of the program, the tutors provide an intensive weekend of workshops, tutorials, seminars and masterclasses for the AYO ensemble and local musicians. This culminates in a performance by the AYO ensemble. In Stage 2, the AYO ensemble returns to each community



Top: AYO Wind Quintet—Melissa Doecke (flute); Li Ling Chen (oboe); Mitchell Berick (clarinet); Robert MacMillan (French horn); Kristen Scholes (bassoon)—inspire the musicians of tomorrow at a local school prior to YACA Warrnambool

Bottom: AYO Wind Quintet and its tutors, Southern Cross Soloists, join musicians from Bundaberg Youth and Bundaberg Symphony Orchestras in Bundaberg on 5 September 2003

Right: AYO bassoonist, Kristen Scholes, participant in YACA Warrnambool in May 2003, with a budding young bassoonist in Apollo Bay

Photography: courtesy of the Australian Youth Orchestra



and local project participants rehearse alongside them. A public performance at each location shows off the combined talents of the AYO ensemble and young local participants. One local participant, Susan Scott of Bathurst noted, 'Alongside our wonderful tutors were the five AYO representatives whose talent and musicality amazed and inspired us all. It is through such inspiration that the motivation to practise and challenge yourself is born'.

'The most important thing I got out of these weekends was the self-motivation and confidence in myself and in my playing.'

In 2003 the Young Australian Concert Artists program went to Albany (WA), Grafton and Bathurst (NSW), Bundaberg (Qld) and Warrnambool (Vic.). By the end of 2003, this program will have been resident in 15 regional communities across Australia. 'The opportunity for local students to work with professional musicians was invaluable. All the teachers noticed an increase in practice and motivation by our local students,' says Emma Luxton, a strings teacher from Albany.

The cost of the program to regional music students is currently set at only \$15 each. Nevertheless AYO can only afford to visit a limited number of regions in any one year,



even though demand for the program could justify a great many more. Another constraint is the travelling time involved. However, the success of the program has meant other regionally-based endeavours are being considered, including the possibility of longer-term residencies.

Through its Young Australian Concert Artists program, AYO is building a great long-term legacy; a vibrant musical culture in regional Australia and the opportunity for all of Australia's talented young musicians—no matter where—to reach their full potential.

Funding/support: Corporate sponsorships, such as the Nelson Meers Foundation, contribute to the Young Australian Concert Artists program. Since its inception, collaborative support, including resources, venues, marketing and organisational assistance has been provided by Country Arts WA, Regional Arts NSW, Queensland Arts Council, Regional Arts Victoria and Arts NT. The Australian Youth Orchestra receives core funding from the Australian Government through the Department of Communications, Information, Technology and the Arts, and the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

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