Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to our Students, Staff, Families and Community Partners. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2013.

Viva la Musica

Here we are at the end of the year - thank you to all the staff, students and friends who kept us going through 2012.

Special thanks to Andy Downer our Acting Head of Music for all his hard work in getting the Cert III course running and completed! Thank you also to Lydie Boyd and Janene Brooks in the office and Ben Goldsmith & Bob Taylor who look after the building. Big welcome to Zoe Abbott our new Community Music Coordinator and Rochelle Wright, Early Childhood Music Coordinator.

It’s all about the Music

The myriad of ways in which music can enrich and even save a life, enliven a community and lift the spirit are countless. Music can touch our hearts, move us to tears, spark an irresistible urge to move. Music is a means to express, a way to connect, to find community, some common ground and a place to belong when words and social conventions perhaps leave us floundering. Each one of us has our personal and intimate relationship with music and you know what it is that music means to you.

Learning keeps us interested and interesting, engaged and engaging; and the study of music provides us with enough content to fill many life times. Learning with others puts us in contact with like minds and kindred spirits as well as those who challenge us – providing more wonderful lessons. Learning music technique, theory and styles provides us all with more and more tools for artistic expression and opportunity to connect through music.

For me music and learning music is about community, transformation and just doing our best. At the Con we teach all ages and all abilities and I’d like to tell you about one of our 5 yr olds. Little Olive is an absolute cracker – she has been learning the violin since she was 3 yrs old, performed this year in the NRYO with 55 other young musicians – including lots of teenagers – and she held her own with aplomb. I learn a great deal from Olive – to be present, to smile, to always do my best, to respect the music, to practice my lessons, to be open, to laugh, to not take myself too seriously and to be generous.

It is a generosity of spirit in musicians and teachers that makes all the difference between a good performance, a good lesson or a life-changing performance or a lesson that will never be forgotten. A generosity of spirit in performers and teachers doesn’t mean bells and whistles and spoon feeding, it doesn’t even require flawless technique. What it is and what makes it transformative for us all is that the sharing of music, talent, technical knowledge is done joyously and willingly, with respect, authenticity and compassion and involves the teacher and student or musicians and audience in an equal relationship that is all about the music.

- Anita Bellman
Executive Director
The Northern Rivers Conservatorium has recently been approved as a VET Fee-Help provider for the Diploma of Music course in 2013.

We are very excited to be able to offer VET Fee-Help assistance. What this means is that our Diploma students will incur no up-front payment of fees.

The full time course commencing March 4th, 2013 covers the practical, theoretical, technical, business and creative elements of music making. Students get plenty of band rehearsal and performance opportunities and also a weekly one on one lesson with an expert tutor on their instrument or as a vocalist.

“People working in the music industry require a broad range of skills. The idea of a ‘portfolio career’ is really important in this industry. It is rare for someone to make their living solely as a singer/songwriter these days. You need to have a lot of strings to your bow. For example, on top of being a good musician, it helps to be able to do your own recording and production, organise gigs, promote and market online and have great networking and communication skills. The Diploma course is designed to put people on this multi-skilled path.” says Andy Downer, Head of Music.

Over the past 21 years of operation the Conservatorium has had plenty of success stories, including past students such as Blue King Brown’s Natalie Pa’apa’a and more recent graduates like members of the band Alice Blu, currently gigging in Melbourne.

Jo Loewenthal from Alice Blu says: “I think there is a really creative vibe in the building, it’s just a great place to create”. And Shaun Johnston: “I came to the Con straight after Year 10 with my band Alice Blu, we wanted to just focus on music. What I learnt at the Con made it easier for me to jump straight into the Associate Degree in Sound Engineering I’m studying now – it gave me a huge head start.”

The first round of auditions took place on 11th December and the next scheduled date is Tuesday 29th January 2013.

For more information, or to apply contact the Conservatorium on 6621 2266, or visit the website: www.nrcac.edu.au/qualifications/music_diploma/music_diploma.html

www.studyassist.gov.au
Northern Rivers Youth Orchestra

The inaugural 2012 NRYO 3 day school holiday workshop culminated in a dazzling performance at the Whitebrook Theatre, Southern Cross University.

NRYO 2012

During the July School holidays more than 50 young musicians descended on the Northern Rivers Conservatorium with one thing on their young minds - MUSIC. The orchestra players ranged in age from 5 to 18 years and came from as far afield as Coffs Harbour, Murwillumbah and even New Zealand.

The three days of workshops included sectional rehearsals with our expert tutors Stephanie Higgs, Julius Hofstetter, Ben Van Kleef, Lynne Compton and Alex O’Reilly. Stephanie Higgs who led the strings section was also Arranger, Musical Director and Conductor for the event.

We included all ages and abilities and even had some non-readers participating in the event. To everyone’s delight, the Finale Concert held at the Lismore Workers Club was a true highlight of the year. The standard of performance across all studios drew comment from teachers, students, parents and visitors. Particular mention must go to the Youth Jazz Orchestra led by Julius Hofstetter. These young musicians play Big Band charts that many adults would have trouble getting their chops around! We are very excited that Julius will be starting a Junior Youth Jazz Orchestra in 2013.

Open Day 2012 was such a blast with great performances from our Cert III Students, Teacher Ensemble, Vox Angelica Teenage Choir and Vox Caldera Chamber Choir (just to name a few). Fantastic open workshops with InChoir, Early Childhood Music, and internationally acclaimed percussionist and composer Michael Askill. Local dignitaries Mayor Jenny Dowell and the Hon, Janelle Saffin (Fed MP) were present. Aunty June Gordon delivered a beautiful Welcome to Country. “Jazz Unlocked” Masterclass with Ken Stubbs and Steve Newcombe (Head of Jazz, Brisbane Conservatorium) gave participants a lot to ponder and practice on the art of Improvisation. The joint was positively jumping and we loved meeting all the new students who came along for a test run.

Worth a read is the blog of our first flute Caitlyn Drews: http://notebooksisters.blogspot.com.au/2012/07/youth-orchestra.html

Plans for NRYO 2013 are underway again for the July school holidays - we’ll keep you posted.

GALA CONCERT & OPEN DAY

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MUSIC MARATHON - LET’S RAISE $10,000

Our dear old building is in need of some serious TLC. As a matter of urgency we will be undertaking roof, mortar and window repairs and painting commencing January 2013 as part of our Raise the Roof program of building upgrades. We are hopeful that our application through the Community Building Partnership Program will be successful and we appreciate the support of our State MP Thomas George and Major Jenny Dowell.

YOU CAN HELP by getting involved in our Music Marathon on Saturday 23rd March 2013. We are aiming to raise $10,000 by playing non-stop music from 9am - 9pm with sponsorship of $1 for every minute of music performed. Students, teachers, past students, friends of the Con can gather sponsors to come and play on the day. It’s just like a walk-a-thon or a read-a-thon only this time it’s playing your instrument.

Your teacher will help you decide on your Marathon Pieces and will also time their play length. Then you just need to get out there and get some sponsors - please aim for $1 for every minute of music as a guide. The student who raises the most money will win a Term of FREE lessons.

Contact us on 02 6621 2266 if you would like to get involved.
Imogen Wolf has been the Head of Music at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium Arts Centre for many years. In fact, Imogen is one of the Conservatorium’s Diploma of Music graduates and prior to taking on the challenging role of running the Music Department she was the Head of Voice.

Many of you may know Imogen also as the Choir Director of Bangalow’s Choir Baby and the Northern Rivers Conservatorium’s InChoir. Totally devoted to harmony, Imogen is well loved by choristers and audiences alike.

Imogen’s passion is singing and having fun doing it, and she loves to share that passion through the power and beauty of music from the gospel, folk, African and other world music traditions. She has been running community choirs in the local area for the last 8 years, co-facilitates the Joy of Singing workshop at Camp Creative each year, and has run harmony singing and vocal technique workshops in Australia and Japan.

Imogen won the 2005 North Coast Entertainment Industry Association Dolphin Award for Best Female Vocal. Her approach to vocal tuition is informed by a keen interest in vocal anatomy and function. She supports students in developing ease, agility and range through technical and expressive exploration. The voice is human beings’ greatest expressive tool, and Imogen encourages her students to deepen their relationship with their voice as an instrument, while developing both their performance skills and overall musicianship.

Imogen has an ease with people and a musical intelligence that made her an excellent Head of Music - we will certainly miss her in that role.

We are very fortunate, however, that she will continue to teach in the course in the Vocal Studio and also continue to lead InChoir in the Community Music Department.

Imogen is also one of the Coordinators for the 2013 In Harmony Choralfest in Bangalow. Imogen will be delivering a workshop on the Saturday morning as well as running the “Big Sing” rehearsal on the Sunday AND performing with her choirs. In amongst all that Imogen will be undertaking her number one role of Mother to Lilybel.

Imogen Wolf

Long-standing Head of Music in the Academy Department, Imogen is now to devote all her time to Baby Lilybel, Choirs and Vocal Training.
Hello & Good-bye

Bruce McNicol has worn many hats at the Con for more than twenty years and we wish him a wonderful “retirement”.

We welcome new Community Music Coordinator Zoe Abbott and say au revoir to drama teacher Ajita Cannings.

Bruce McNicol

During the early to mid 90’s Bruce was Head of Music, and along with the writing and accreditation of both our Certificate IV and Diploma in Contemporary Music, he also created a regional Choir Festival (Choirs Alive) and was musical director of the Con’s production of the musical Hair. In the late 90’s he was Deputy Chair and saw the Con registered to add Certificates in Contemporary Dance and Dramatic Arts to its suite of courses.

Over the past sixteen years as well as teaching piano accordion and piano, Bruce has lectured in the Con’s Academy program in Songwriting, Teaching Practice, Conducting, and Keyboard Skills. Thank you Bruce!

His list of credits beyond the Con reads like a “Musician’s Utopia”, with highlights that include work for Woodford Folk Festival, Musica Viva, Illawarra Folk Festival and Mooramilla Choir Festival. Closer to home, Lismore Lantern Parade, Lismore Theatre Company, and choir festival A Choired Taste have all enjoyed Bruce’s expertise and enthusiasm. And remember the Spring Arts Ball of the early 90’s? He was part of that too. If you want to continue the Wow Bruce! Experience, look at www.brucemcnicol.com.au

We wish Bruce a wonderful “retirement” joyously composing. I get the feeling we’ve more to hear from Bruce.

Ajita Cannings

Ajita Maria Cannings was a highly valued member of staff at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium Arts Centre Inc from 2009 - 2012. Ajita successfully ran the Conservatorium’s after-school Drama Program for children and teenagers.

Ajita has been working with young people to create & perform theatre for the last 12 years; firstly with the Circolino Pipistrello Children’s Circus in Switzerland, then as Tutor and Director of the Riverina Young People’s Theatre in Wagga Wagga and as Assistant Director to the NORPA production Engine. Ajita has also performed and created theatre with Word of Mouth Productions touring HSC Poetry works to schools and at Splendour in the Grass with The Tuntable Circus. Ajita has participated in NIDA Summer Schools in Acting, Directing, Scriptwriting and Youth Theatre.

During her time as our Drama teacher, her students were involved in self-devised works, theatre sports, poetry, improvisation, Eisteddfods and scripted dramatic pieces. Ajita made connections for students with the wider creative community in Lismore when her class presented work as part of the Lismore Lantern Festival. She organised field trips for her students to see professional theatre productions by local and visiting artists to enrich their drama classes.

We wish Ajita every success and welcome new drama teacher Phil Blackman in 2013.

Zoe Abbott

Welcome to Zoe Abbott, our new Community Music Co-ordinator.

Zoe had her first flute lesson here at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium at the age of seven. She went on to train at the Anne McDonald College of Performing Arts and Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, before graduating from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Performance Studies.

Zoe has performed with a number of Sydney based companies, including Premier State Ballet, Imprint Dance Theatre, Savva Emanon Dancers, and Newtown’s new theatre. She has also worked in the Japanese television industry, and played flute in the 90’s J-pop group Y’s Place.

Zoe is pleased to have returned to the Northern Rivers, and to the Conservatorium. With a strong professional background in university and school administration, she supports excellence in music and arts education by coordinating the Conservatorium’s Community Music and Music in Schools programmes.

Zoe has landed with a bang! putting her special stamp on the Gala Concert, Open Day 2012 and cooking up the great idea for the Music Marathon. In the spirit of Lifelong Learning she has also recently taken up the Cello under the tutelage of our Stephanie Higgs and is the newest member of “Mellow Cellos”.

Northern Rivers Conservatorium Arts Centre, Connect Newsletter - December 2012
2013 Events

We’ve got a great year in store for you - here are some dates for your diary:

**CLASSES RESUME**
Tuesday 29th January
Community Music programs recommence on site. We look forward to seeing you again in 2013.

**DIPLOMA OF MUSIC**
Monday 4th March
Classes commence in our new Diploma of Music with students receiving VET Fee-Help. Audition rounds will be held in January and February. This is a very exciting development for our Academy Music Department.

**MUSIC MARATHON**
Saturday 23rd March
The Conservatorium will present 12 hours of non-stop music from 9am-9pm as a fundraiser for our Raise the Roof campaign for the TLC of our beautiful building. Students and teachers will be sponsored for every minute of music they perform. Our goal is $10,000 so that means $15 per minute.

**TILLY IS A TOP SHELF MUSICIAN**

Tilly has been learning piano for two and a half years at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium and recently achieved Honours for her 2nd grade AMEB exams. On top of that she also completed her Preliminary exams in violin and cello, gaining a high distinction in violin and honours for cello after less than a year of tuition.

Her teacher Wendy Turner said “Tilly has incredible determination and practices all instruments before and after school - she never lets her physical difficulties hold her back”. A well-rounded musician, Tilly learns singing as well, is in the children’s choir and studies composition.

At the Lismore Eisteddfod Tilly won 5 first prizes in one day. Playing cello she won the section for Stringed Instruments (not a violin), playing violin she won first prize in her aged group for Violin, playing piano she won the section for Grade 2 AMEB pieces, and her composition won first prize in the Composition section and to top it off she won the Most Promising Juvenile Instrumentalist for the whole eisteddfod.

**MUSIC IN SCHOOLS**

2012 has been a fantastic year for our schools partnership program, with thirteen dedicated teachers delivering individual and group tuition to almost two hundred students in nine schools across the Northern Rivers region. The growth and success of the program means that many students are now ready to start playing together in ensembles.

We look forward to seeing our Music in Schools students on stage in our Concert Room on the 23rd of March for our Music Marathon!