



MELBOURNE  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA



Report to the Community 2015

## 2015 Report to the Community

It is a very exciting time for Melbourne Chamber Orchestra to be the leading small professional orchestra in Victoria. 2015 has been a celebration of the capacity of Melbourne's talented chamber music community to create unique and colourful performances for our unique state and city.

Local excellence, inspirational programming, community spirit, and a strong commitment to access remain at the core of our vision. As audiences have grown to know and love our approach, support for the orchestra has surged: three of the top ten bestselling Melbourne MCO concerts were in 2015.

In the talented musicians we support in our chamber music ecosystem, we have the raw materials of artistic greatness. Our Artistic Director William Hennessy created an energetic season that provided a fresh window on our artistic heritage while looking forward to the artform's future. Leading soloists including Stefan Cassomenos and Genevieve Lacey joined the orchestra as we traversed 400 years of music, including seven terrific new works commissioned by us for the enjoyment of Victorian audiences.

The orchestra continues to lead in regional touring. Our ambitious *Hennessy's Beethoven* tour, featuring Beethoven's Violin Concerto and a touring party of over 30, resulted in record attendance numbers for our venue presenters and community presenters. Next year we are booked to perform a record 25 touring performances, covering almost every corner of the state. When I travel with the orchestra around Victoria, one of the most frequent comments I hear is "we are so lucky to have a performance like this in our community." It's a privilege for us to make a difference in the lives of so many Victorians through access to live fine music. As a truly independent arts organisation grounded in the Melbourne community, I am grateful to the many generous supporters of the orchestra, individuals, trusts and foundations, and companies, for their vital support which enables us to serve audiences across Victoria. We look forward to an even bigger, and better, 2016!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Jackson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard Jackson  
Executive Director

## OUR IMPACT, IN THE WORDS OF OUR AUDIENCES:

“It was a completely wonderful event: stylish music-making, commitment and strong communication from the performers”

*Audience member, Melbourne*

“We enjoy the regular visits and feel we are welcoming “friends” when MCO comes back to town”

*Audience Member, Warragul*

“Keep up the great work! You are my favourite chamber orchestra in Melbourne and I find the quality of the performances surpass many established orchestras that tour Melbourne. I hope William Hennessey and his musicians continue to put on wonderful performances in the future. I look forward to attending them.”

*Audience member, Melbourne*

“Sheer energy and perfection.”

*Audience Member, Casterton*

“It is the joy of shared music making and listening that cannot be manufactured. ... Just the lively love of discovery and the transforming power of sound vibration and those magical unexpected thrills... All these are the unexpressed desires that keep me wanting to experience... Thanks”

*Audience member, Melbourne*

“Thank you! We really appreciate being able to go to a concert like this in our small town.”

*Audience Member, Traralgon*

“Was an absolutely beautiful concert and a beautiful night out. Thanks you so much for coming to Yackandandah, I can't wait to see next year's concert!!”

*Audience Member, Yackandandah*

“There is a freshness and vivacity about the MCO which I particularly enjoy. It is great to see younger artists given the chance to perform, and the Melbourne Recital Centre is a superb venue. I attend MCO on Sunday afternoons, and if I had to give up a subscription it would not be the MCO!”

*Audience member, Melbourne*

“I value what MCO brings to Melbourne's music experience. May the ensemble continue to flourish. Thanks to William Hennessey for his vision and leadership. Thanks to the Ensemble for their commitment to music making.”

*Audience member, Melbourne*

“It took my breath away and there were those magic moments at the end of pieces where there was absolute silence as the audience was still in the music.”

*Audience Member, Melbourne*



*MCO performs with pianist Stefan Cassomenos at Federation Square in 2015.*

MCO performed 11 mainstage Melbourne season concerts in two seasons, one at the Deakin Edge, Federation Square, and the other at Melbourne Recital Centre. Audience support for MCO continues to increase and 2015 was the strongest year of single ticket sales for our regular Melbourne season. Our attendances in Melbourne also increased nearly 10% over 2014 figures.

Particular highlights of the mainstage season included performances with recordist Genevieve Lacey, pianist Stefan Cassomenos, and violinists Ioana Tache and Kristian Winther. The orchestra performed nine Australian premieres including a new octet by Paul Stanhope and two new orchestral works by Nicholas Buc.

The Deakin Edge season is in its second year. The number of subscribers at the Edge doubled from 2014, and the overall number of subscribers across both our seasons continues to slowly rise, defying the trend in other organisations.

## TOURING



*MCO's chamber music ensemble, Australian Octet, performs at the Daylesford Town Hall.*

Regional touring forms a key part of the orchestra's service to the Victoria community. For many communities we are now the only professional orchestra that serves them.

There are four touring projects in 2015:

- Hennessy's Beethoven
- Souvenir de Florence
- Fives & Sixes
- A Little Night Music

2015 touring destinations include: Bairnsdale, Casterton, Daylesford, Geelong, Glengarry, Horsham, Mornington, St Kilda, Swan Hill, Traralgon, Warragul, Werribee and Yackandandah.

## FREE CONCERTS

MCO performed a free concert as part of the Melbourne Festival's *Haydn for Everyone* series in October. We believe this is MCO's first contribution to the Melbourne Festival.



## EDUCATION



*Students rehearse together as part of MCO's Education program in Warragul.*

2015 has been a busy year for MCO's education programs.

Over 90 students were involved across three programs. In Geelong, we partnered with Geelong Chamber Music Society and Bay City Strings to provide a significant program for 50 young string musicians, and in Warragul and Mornington we had around 20 students in each program.

The programs include a full day of workshops with experienced pedagogues drawn from the orchestra. In Warragul, students had the opportunity to perform for their families as part of MCO, during MCO's performance at West Gippsland Arts Centre.

In addition to our education programs, we also conduct masterclasses across Victoria. This year masterclasses will be conducted in Daylesford, Traralgon and Yackandandah, providing high-level string tuition for young performers across Victoria.



*A student receives a masterclass from MCO's Artistic Director, William Hennessy, in Daylesford.*

## OTHER PROJECTS

### Fives & Sixes

With members of Australian Octet, MCO performed two projects with partners Linden New Art and Narkoojee Winery, showcasing small format chamber music in unique environments.



*Members of Australian Octet perform at Narkoojee Winery.*



*Members of Australian Octet perform at Linden New Art.*

### **A Feast of Music, Daylesford**

MCO's annual Daylesford project was extended in 2015 to include a performance of sonatas for violin and piano at the Anglican Church, and a masterclass for talented local violin and piano students. The chamber music dinner at The Argus was sold out.



*A quartet of MCO musicians performs as part of a dinner at The Argus, Hepburn Springs*

## **SERVICE STATISTICS**

Total number of attendees*	10,469	8,438^
Mainstage (Melbourne) attendances	5,212	5,708
Number of performers employed	66	57
Number of performances	43	32
Number of different venues	27	19
Number of touring performances	23	18
Number of free performances	2	1
Number of new works and arrangements presented	4	7

*\*provisional at 15 December 2015*

*^A smaller touring schedule than 2014 contributed to a reduced audience attendance overall. Our Melbourne audience grew by about 10%.*