

2023 Victorian Recorder Guild Annual Report for 2022

Hello and welcome to the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Recorder Guild.

Last year's AGM was very well attended.

One benefit from the pandemic was the discovery that we could hold our committee meeting on-line.

This not only saves time travelling and the related expenses, but also we can have members who live virtually anywhere.

The AGM was followed by an excellent Blow-in directed by Liz Zetzmann. We played "So trinken wir alle" by Arnold von Bruck, "Now is the Month of Maying" by Thomas Morley and All in a Garden Green. These were followed by a beautiful "Folk Song Suite" by Andrew Davidson. We finished with "Samburu Samba" by Lyndon Hilling.

For the Blow-in on Sunday 17th March, I was asked to replace Rodney Waterman at very short notice.

I accepted the challenge and rummaged through my collection of music and selected several pieces.

Meanwhile I discovered "A Ukrainian Prayer" by John Rutter.

Moved by this extraordinarily beautiful piece of music, with permission from Dr Rutter, I arranged it as an 8 part Recorder Group.

I was very pleased that I did not have to alter a single note in the arrangement! We were fortunate to have young Damien on the Contra Bass on the day which added extra depth to the music.

As the music was unpublished, Dr Rutter requested we donate to a fund to help Ukrainian refugees. The committee chose the ABC Gives Ukraine Appeal and by

the end of the year, the arrangement had collected a considerable amount of money as other groups had bought the rights to perform it.

On May the first, the 50th anniversary Soirée finally came to fruition. After a perfectly timed programme organised by Beate and Yvonne, including the young and less young, we celebrated with the cutting of a beautiful cake produced by Di Goulding, and glasses of non-alcoholic champagne. Our founding members, Gwen Rathjens and Barb Praetz were duly acknowledged. Jill, Gwen, Kon and Jim had obviously put in many long hours to create the visual display in another room.

The 50th anniversary bags were a huge success with only a few left unsold.

Thank you to Yvonne who came up with this very practical idea.

Unlike most bag-based fundraisers, we all have our own individually designed and easily recognisable bag, or bags.

On Sunday 17th July, Rodney presented a Blow-in as he had been unable to conduct our session in March. Rodney prepared some Bach Chorale Preludes, Steve Marshall's 'Blues' for 5 part Recorders, and finally 'Mega-RONY' for Recorder orchestra, by Pete Rose. It was a varied and interesting programme.

They say, "From little things, big things grow", and the Winter Project on 27th June conducted by Ryan Williams was an excellent example. Beginning from a suggestion at a committee meeting and growing to a concert and Blow-in involving over 50 members was a most impressive development. I assume this would have been the largest participation in a VRG event in at least the last three years.

Ryan Williams sent us a wide variety of pieces to print and have ready in display folders, a very practical and time-saving way of distributing music!

The Winter Project consisted of three rehearsals of two and a half hours held on a monthly basis during winter followed by a final concert and blow in.

We are organising a similar event in this year.

The non-residential Spring Recorder Festival was held at St Paul's Anglican Church from 30th September to 2nd October.

The presenters were Ruth Wilkinson, Hannah Coleman and Alex Bailliet-Joly.

I found Ruth Wilkinson's talk entitled 'Le Livre Vermelle de Monserrat' to be extremely interesting and playing the music was very rewarding.

Our second soirée for the year on November 6th worked perfectly. It was coordinated by Liz Zetzman and took place at the Balwyn Community Centre on November 6th. There was a variety of well-prepared items starting with the Melbourne Recorder Orchestra's first public performance in three years. The new location proved very suitable for the occasion, being exactly the correct size and temperature.

Our final Blow-in for 2022 presented by Beate Lackman was enjoyed very much by the surprisingly small number of people who attended. Especially when compared with our end of year blow-in in 2018 at the Frankston Mechanics Institute where every Recorder player from the Mornington Peninsula and multiple others came to join in the fun.

We played music specifically for Christmas on predominantly lower pitched instruments creating a beautiful, mellow sound. From the wide range of music Beate had chosen, the highlight for me was the beautiful arrangement of the Christmas Concerto by Corelli. It has always been one of my top favourite pieces.

Now to 2023.

Anna Stegmann presented a Master Class and Blow-in on Sunday the 22nd of January.

On Sunday February the 19th, at Stonnington Community Uniting Church, Beate Lackmann and Jill Ferris shared a Blow-in was so well attended that many had to share music!

An added bonus of attending these events is the entertaining and fascinating information given by our presenters about the individual pieces.

In other news, Beate organised these very practical lanyards to be worn at all activities. Please don't forget to write your ICE contact on the back.

On a very sad note, I acknowledge the death of one of our life members, Barbara Praetz.

She spent a lifetime of work with Gwen Rathgens developing the Victorian Recorder Guild to become the very active society it is now. Barb joined the Guild in 1973, just two years after it started, and she became an enthusiastic and active member immediately.

After being secretary from 1974 to 1982 she was elected President and continued as that until 1985 She took on the role of Secretary again from 1999 to 2002.

The International Festival Recorder '84 was just one example of the events she worked on with great competence and flair.

She helped plan and run many events including the residential weekends in Myrniong.

She will be greatly missed, and I refer you to the excellent appraisal by Gwen Rathgens in our newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the Victorian Recorder Guild in 2022.

Now for the Thank Yous.

Firstly, to the VRG committee:

Jill Ferris, Celia Sexton, Sue Lyons, Jim Bland, Kon Wong, Beate Lackman, Di Golding and Yvonne Clarke.

Also thankyou to the Spring Weekend Committee, Jane May, Sue Lyons and Liz Zetzmann and Jill Ferris. So much work needs to go into making this annual event such a success.

And finally, to our librarians, Amanda Witt and Christine Thorpe/ Thorne? for all the effort in cataloguing the music we are constantly being generously donated. I think we must have the largest collection of Recorder music in Australia.

If I have omitted anyone I sincerely apologise, but all of you deserve thanks for helping our Guild run so smoothly and helping to restate our lovely instrument to its worthy place.

Suzanne Palmer-Holton