

President Memoir

Di Burt

2002 – 2004

My aims were *i)* to work towards rebuilding our financial base, *ii)* to facilitate communication between branches and Head office, *iii)* to encourage active involvement by members in our Association and *iv)* to spread the message that we need to share our experiences, skills and wealth of knowledge.

2002.....

- Our computer database corruption highlighted not only our dependence on technology, but also the sizeable funds required to ensure our office equipment could operate at optimum levels.
- A fabulous Chinese concert/dinner helped raise funds for the purchase of a new computer. The wonderful part of this was the performances by so many musicians of outstanding ability who gave their services free of charge.
- The establishment of our web site last year created a sizeable hole in our bank balance but our voluntary webmaster – Peter Robertson – helped us get back on our feet and with the encouragement of our then Secretary, Bev Kirk ‘hits’ on and referrals via our web site mtaq.mtaq.org.au began to grow.
- Offering professional development became almost unviable because of low attendance. It was hard for us to compete with retailers who could host free workshops with both Australian and International presenters.
- Membership of MTA’s was put on the table for discussion at a meeting of State presidents in an effort to produce acceptable criteria for all States. Despite much continuing debate, we were unable to establish one set of criteria to suit all.
- Public Liability Insurance took up many hours of our time but we were able to set up a reasonably priced policy with AON to cover all members. AON also gave a commission to MTAQ for each policy taken up.
- The year finished on an extremely sad note with the untimely death of one of our councilors - Alan Lane – a man of integrity and a true gentleman.

2003.....

- I approached Piers Lane with regards to becoming a Patron of MTAQ. He accepted and so the involvement of the Lane family continued and we have an international presence involved in our Association.
- Our journal Bravura was becoming difficult to produce four times a year both financially and time wise. The February journal was a logistical nightmare for our secretary in gathering articles and meeting the publishing deadline. The era of 3 journals a year with a bigger 80 page version instead of 50 pages began!
- The minimum recommended tuition fee went up to \$44 an hour and the accompanying fee to \$65 for ½ hour rehearsal and examination.
- Fundraising was given a boost by magnificent support from our Patron Max Olding who, together with Pamela Page, gave a delightful duo piano concert on Mother’s Day.

- MTAQ Music Expo was held in City Hall. While this did not generate the funds we had hoped for, it did show that many members shared my belief that we should think in terms of 'what can I do for MTAQ rather than what can MTAQ do for me'.
- Student concerts were initiated with Brisbane based performer/teacher Helen Winther offering feedback to participants.
- I had the idea of establishing a bi-annual weekend of professional development in memory of Alan Lane to honour his wonderful contribution to both music and the musical community. Keeping in mind his oft quoted words – “Keep workshops simple – spend the money on the quality of the content not frills”, I began to plan.....

2004.....

- The inaugural Alan Lane Memorial Weekend, sponsored by Ellaways/Petrof, was held on April 17th and 18th at Stuartholme School. I had major support from Janelle Gatz in planning and bringing this event to fruition and councilors were behind us every step of the way. It included two days of workshops and master classes, finishing with a multi-instrumental concert featuring several young local musicians of distinction. The dynamic didgeridoo player William Barton also performed and the evening culminated in a brilliant performance by Piers Lane. Piers also gave the inaugural address and conducted two master classes. Enid Lane, gentle lady that she was, attended the concert and attendees wrote their memories of Alan in a special book which was later presented to Enid. The entire weekend was supported by many elite teachers and performers who gave their services free of charge or at a minimal cost. Participants came from all over Queensland. – a n indication of how many lives Alan had touched over the years. .I consider this my major achievement in my time as President and have been delighted with the way the Branches have responded to the opportunity to host the Alan Lane Memorial Weekend over the ensuing years– thus keeping Alan’s memory alive.

My time as President was filled with many memorable moments, some exhilarating, some poignant, some sad, some frustrating, some motivational and some challenging but each one shaped my term into an unbelievable opportunity to broaden my perspectives, make new friends and to learn.

I learned that:

- music teachers who have been in the business for over 50 years still continue to have an enduring love and enthusiasm for their vocation and readily share their wealth of knowledge
- young teachers just starting out have a great thirst for learning new skills and equally have wonderful new ideas and strategies to impart
- many elite musicians have not lost touch with the grass roots of their profession
- there are many dynamic people who work quietly in the background to make sure MTAQ not only survives, but thrives
- we should make sure we have time to pause and soak up the many facets of music that surround us
- we have some outstanding young musical talent — thanks in part to great teachers!
- computers aren’t the be all and end all of everything
- you can at least please some of the people all of the time!

It is difficult to achieve everything you set out to do but heartening to know that new Presidents will take up the challenge and continue to work to ensure our Association both thrives and survives.