

## President Memoir

**John Colwill**

**2006 - 2009**

The Association was 85 years young when my presidency started and MTAQ was standing on the shoulders of giants. It was conducting vibrant seminars, competitions, and workshops, supported by a wonderful Queensland community of volunteers.

Then early in 2006, a mighty sforzando shook up our Taringa office. It left us without a secretary. In this hiatus, think of it as an interrupted cadence, it was the collective support of our valued patrons and past presidents, as well as the wisdom of our continuing Treasurer, Judy Neal and our incumbent Councillors, that empowered our newly appointed Secretary, Kerry Thomson and me, a new President, to resolve the cadence.

Happily MTAQ kept flourishing.

A perfect resolution you might say.

Thank you to you all.

Reflecting on this time and the three busy years that followed, I have to remark on several standout themes:

**Generosity** - Already I have alluded to the generosity of the people who supported MTAQ, giving time and expertise to our projects across the state and then there were the businesses and performing arts companies that gave us monies and in kind assistance.

Most of our members and much of our activities were/are centred in Brisbane where signature events, the Queensland Vocal Competition and the Queensland Piano Competition grew in stature with outstanding support from families and teachers together with the most generous sponsorship from Allans Music Group, Ellaways and our major examination bodies. MTAQ volunteers who coordinated these events to mention but a few, were Judy Neal, Ann Chang, Lynn Haug, Regis Danillon, Annie Laver and Paul Neal, Barbara Tate, Debbie Daley, Roslyn Wight and Celia Milne.

To extend our reach outside the capital, MTAQ for the first time held heats in Toowoomba in 2006, with the support of Kathy Pingel at the University of Southern Queensland.

**Distance** - As a lad, I lived in country Queensland - Cairns, Gold Coast hinterland, Darling Downs (where my piano lessons started), Townsville, and Mount Isa, so a mission of mine while MTAQ president was to support and foster the regional activities of MTAQ.

Sadly, come the end of my term, the activities in some of these branches ran out of power and they downgraded to affiliated groups.

It was often apparent that regional members saw themselves as distant cousins and over such big Queensland distances, that is the tyranny of this place.

I was able to attend the Alan Lane Memorial Workshop in Cairns, 2006 (congratulations to the organisers Anne Linneman, Margery Duffy and Robyn Browning) and to participate in the 2008 Townsville workshop (thanks to organisers Christine Pulverenti, Robyn Knibb, Pam Abraham,

Margaret and Tony Fitzgerald, Jeanine Tegg, and Lynn Burney). The latter connected with Australian Festival of Chamber Music of which Piers Lane, Alan's son and MTAQ Patron, was Artistic Director at the time. At the workshop, a Special General Meeting was conducted to streamline our Constitution's Membership categories to upgrade Teaching Members to Professional Members and encourage all to be involved in ongoing professional development.

**Child Safe Practices** - In 2006 MTAQ asked its members to step in line with the Queensland Government's eligibility for working with children requirements and supply their Blue Card number on our annual membership renewal. This was an important ongoing safeguard to our practice.

**Continuity, Connections and Gratitude** - On my watch, I was sad to report that MTAQ Patron Noel Nickson died (September 2006). His contribution to music education in our state as inaugural Professor of Music at the University of Queensland was wide-ranging; he arrived in 1966 but before that he had an important association with MTAQ during WW II, giving lectures and concerts for our association when stationed in Brisbane. For me, it was a privilege to be one of his many students at "Uni".

Internationally renowned Wagnerian soprano, Lisa Gasteen, a former student of my singing teacher, Margaret Nickson, "Prof" Nickson's wife was invited as an MTAQ patron in 2008.

One of the connections I am most proud of in my term in office was to foster the work of friend, Therese Milanovic, and her passion for the Taubman Approach. She and Brenda Hunting, incoming MTAQ President in 2009 have become internationally certified instructors in this body-intelligent way of teaching and playing at the piano.

I am grateful for the support MTAQ gave me in promoting my *PIANO PLAY* approach that aims to integrate Kodály aural training with first steps at the piano as well as for lasting friendships that include an important on-going connection with (now) Dr. Jody Heald, President of Tasmania's MTA and a teacher of renown who has led the Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference Association to great things. Our collaboration secured important sponsorship for APPCA from KAWAI Australia and patronage from Piers Lane, both made possible from my contact with these people from my time in the MTAQ chair.

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