Taking Australian music worldwide

MusicAustralia is a federated discovery service that allows people, anywhere in the world, to find and explore a comprehensive store of information on Australian music and musicians from a single access point. The many formats documenting music — scores, recordings, multimedia, pictures, memorabilia, websites, archives and texts — are all brought together in MusicAustralia. Users can seamlessly access both heritage and contemporary Australian music, across all genres and styles — and best of all, it's free!

Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, launched MusicAustralia on 14 March at the National Library of Australia. Guest speaker Robyn Archer spoke enthusiastically of the value of MusicAustralia for all kinds of purposes. Imagine being a community group or local council looking for music for a celebration, a band looking for new inspiration, or a historian musing upon the ways in which a nation's art depicts its stories. Perhaps you want to simply delight in discovering music to play at your piano or to dance to, or to sentimentally recall your youth. Search in MusicAustralia on almost any topic, place, person or title and you will be amazed at how ubiquitous music is.

Using MusicAustralia

The first national music service of its type in the world, MusicAustralia currently contains more than 144 000 music resources, which are described by libraries, archives, museums and arts and cultural organisations across the nation. Over 10 500 of these resources are available online so that, wherever you are, you can 'turn' the pages of a piece of printed music, listen to a sound recording, see a picture of a musician, or visit a website. If it's not online, you can find out who composed, recorded, published, wrote about the music or made it famous. MusicAustralia provides information to help you locate the resource, wherever it is held in Australia, or to order a copy from an online retailer.

A number of search options are available — a simple Google-style search, or an advanced search allowing users to limit by resource type, date and location. You can also launch a search directly from MusicAustralia into other services like Australia Dancing, Picture Australia, Google and the new Australian Research Online service (ARROW).

Those who are not sure where to start can browse through one of the theme trails that illustrate the intersections between Australian music and Australian life. The themes bring together a range of material on topics as diverse as Indigenous Music, Australian Places, Bush and Beach, Performance Spaces, War and Peace, and Explorers.

Development of MusicAustralia

MusicAustralia was developed by the National Library of Australia, together with the National Film and Sound Archive and other cultural organisations. It has been a truly collaborative endeavour, demanding extraordinary expertise, energy and commitment from a wide range of staff from institutions and music organisations across Australia.

Behind the delivery of MusicAustralia lie complex conceptual and technological issues. At the inception of the project in 2001, Australia's music was scattered across many institutions; there were no digital printed music collections, and although some institutions had begun to digitally preserve their sound collections, none had started to deliver them online. With MusicAustralia as the impetus, many thousands of Australian music scores from the collections of the National Library and state libraries and other organisations are now available online; and hundreds of Australian sound recordings from the National Film and Sound Archive and Australian Music Online can now be heard online. In addi-

tion, a large number of music websites have been catalogued and archived in the PANDORA web archive, and these can be found through MusicAustralia.

MusicAustralia enables cultural and educational institutions and the music community to create, share, harvest and aggregate the nation's musical data, resources and information. It uses the existing infrastructure of the National Bibliographic Database (NBD) but has also initiated the development of a new infrastructure to support the addition of non-MARC records from a range of contributors such as the Australian Music Centre and Australian Music Online.

Since the launch of MusicAustralia, use of the web-based service has been very strong. In March, there were 335 304 page views — an average of more than 10 000 views per day. The National Library has received encouraging feedback from the community. One delighted user commented: *'This is the best thing that has happened on the internet for years,'* while another remarked: *'So much actual content is available — I can print out scores at my own desk.'*

Future plans

The service is poised to deliver thousands more online resources as organisations take advantage of the rich potential such online delivery offers to Australian music and to the cultural institutions that support it. MusicAustralia has developed guidelines and standards for creators and organisations who wish to contribute to the service; these guidelines are available on the MusicAustralia website.

We will also be looking at viable sustainable rights management models and strategies to enable more in-copyright Australian music to be seen and heard online. The business of music is being transformed in the age of digital creation, recording, music notation software, score and audio digitisation, and new communication technologies. 'Online, in time' is indeed the way of the future. Discover this free service by visiting http://www.musicaustralia.org.

For more information, e-mail MusicAustralia at musaust@nla.gov.au or phone 02 6262 1536.

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Queen's birthday honours

ALIA congratulates two prominent librarians honoured in this year's Queen's Birthday honours list:

Jan Fullerton, Officer (AO) in the General Division, for services 'to librarianship through the facilitation of wider community access to the collections of the National Library of Australia, the preservation of cultural heritage in digital forms, and collaboration with other collecting agencies nationally and internationally'

Dr Alan Bundy, Member (AM) in the General Division, for services 'to librarianship in university, school and public libraries, to professional development, and to promotion of the role of librarians in educating people in the use of information resources'. ■