MUSIC. PLAY FOR LIFE

Drumroll...

by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet

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28 finalists have been shortlisted from the pool of 225 entrants in the inaugural Awards, run by “Music. Play for Life” with support from NAMM – the International Music Products Industry Association.
With well over two hundred entrants in the Music in Communities Awards, I feel confident saying that community music in Australia is alive and well. Looking at the diversity and quantity of entrants I was struck by the number of hidden community music treasures we have scattered around the country. Choirs, music therapy programmes, indigenous groups, bands, festivals, orchestras, regional conservatoriums, country music clubs, samba schools, folk clubs, drumming circles, whistle pipe bands, studio recording projects, community music organisations, to mention just a few! This initiative has done a fabulous job uncovering these music treasures and showcasing their depth of talent, creativity and community engagement.

The entrants also revealed a wealth of "tricks of the trade" in their applications. To give you a glimpse of what we have on hold the value of inspiring leadership in community music programs, the benefits of community music-making for personal health and wellbeing and the way community music encourages people to express their identity. Not to mention the part community music can play in connecting the generations, the role cultural diversity plays in the vibrancy of community music programs and the openness community groups show to people regardless of their abilities. Many of the entrants also emphasised the benefits of collaborating with the broader community, the importance of careful planning to ensure sustainability and the variety of appropriate venues, facilities and funding for community music groups. Interestingly, these are themes which have also emerged in the Sound Links Australia-wide community music study, which is being run by Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, where she is working on the ARC funded project, Sound Links: Exploring the dynamics of musical communities in Australia and their potential for informing collaboration with music in schools.

As a conductor Brydie has been actively involved in community music-making for a number of years, having directed community bands and orchestras from Australia, Thailand, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Catherine Grant instigated (and delivered) an "Introduction to Classical Music" course in Brisbane's Learn for Leisure adult community education program, and presents the popular weekly 4MBS Classic FM program Your Classical Collection, introducing listeners to the world of classical music. She regularly presents pre-concert talks with The Queensland Orchestra, and 4MBS music appreciation classes in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council libraries. For several years Catherine has been involved with bringing live music performance to high-care residents of Aged Care Facilities. She is a senior research assistant at Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre.

The panel of judges for the shortlisting round

Gregg Howard is a Senior Lecturer at the Queensland Conservatorium where he specialises in the area of world music. He has a strong background in community arts, having been one of the founders of Brisbane Multicultural Arts Centre (BEMAC) in which he held various offices for eight years.

Dr Helen Lancaster was Founding Director of the International Academy of Music (Bangkok). She has encouraged and been involved in many community arts projects, and convened the first Community Music Conference in Mackay, bringing together community musicians from across Australia. Helen is an Adjunct Member of Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre. She maintains an active interest in community music activities and issues.

Peter Luff is Head of Brass and Senior Lecturer in Horn at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and has worked extensively as a tutor, director and advisor with organisations including the Queensland Youth Orchestra Council, Migrant Education and Cultural Development Association, Queensland Band Association, Brisbane Brass Band, Brisbane Excelsior Band and the Brisbane Symphony Orchestra.

Brydie-Leigh Bartleet is a Research Fellow and Lecturer at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, where she is working on the ARC funded project, Sound Links: Exploring the dynamics of musical communities in Australia and their potential for informing collaboration with music in schools.

FINALISTS

ACT
Hand-In-Hand: The Music Education Program at the ANU
Maruku Community Orchestra (MCO)
Music for Everyone
Sing Australia Choir Network

NSW
Blue River – Bosnian Women’s Choir, Sydney
Leichhardt Espresso Chorus (LEC)
Mungindi Music Festival Committee
Musicians Making a Difference (MMAD)
Orange Regional Conservatorium Inc
Sydney Street Choir (SSC) – Program: Standing Tall

NT
Nganampa Health Council
Tangentyere Council Inc Drum Atwern Project Yillia

QLD
Calms Municipal Band Inc
Catalyst Youth Arts Organisation Inc
Charters Towers Country Music Inc
Sweet Freedom

SA
Tutti Ensemble Inc

TAS
Pulse Youth Health Centre ‘Off the Streets and Into the Studio’

VIC
Brunswick Women’s Choir
Dandenong Ranges Music Council Inc
Geelong Concert Band Inc
Kool Skool Recording Project
Music Together
Rhythm Project (RP)
The Song Room Inc

WA
Holyoake Institute drumbeat
Recipe For Jam Residential