

Community celebrities all play a part

Jacqueline Kent
Mosman Orchestra



Ken Allars

'I watched my granddaughter playing percussion at her school concert and I thought: If that's as much fun as it looks, I'll be in it!' said Ben Taylor.

Ben, the timpanist for the Mosman Orchestra, is true to the spirit of community orchestras: enjoyment of the music and your instrument is paramount. Ben has been a member of the Mosman Orchestra for about eighteen months. The timpani were not his first love; he started as a bagpiper some years ago. But he was a working man then, running his own business in outdoor advertising, and could devote too little time to the bagpipes. He also wanted something with greater range. 'I liked their exuberance,' he said, 'but there's a limit to the number of times you can play *Amazing Grace*.' Three or four years ago he turned to the drums, becoming percussionist for the central coast band Tempo Terrific. He still likes jazz, but these days he's more involved in classical music.

And his finest moments? 'Doing the anvil bits in Verdi's *Anvil Chorus*,' he said firmly. 'Tell you what, though – the brake drum I used needed a fair bit of tuning!'

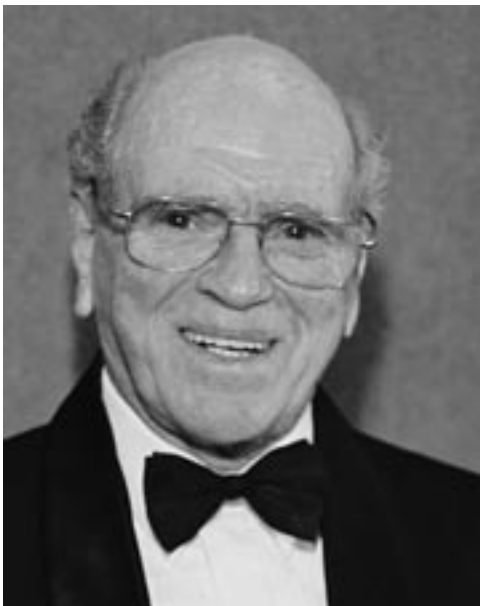
Community orchestras also give up-and-coming musical stars the opportunity to play a wide range of music, both in the orchestra and as soloists.

One such is fourteen-year-old Ken Allars, who performed the Hummel Trumpet Concerto as soloist with the Mosman Orchestra in June this year, to great acclaim. He joined the orchestra when he was thirteen, and has also performed with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra 143.

Ken, a man of few words, started to learn the trumpet at the age of seven, inspired by a James Morrison concert. Currently in Year 9 at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, he is a member of their orchestra, symphonic wind ensemble and stage band. He plays lead trumpet in the State Schools Jazz Orchestra, and has toured in Japan and the USA with ensembles from the NSW Department of Education Arts Unit. He will be touring Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria as a soloist with the State Schools Symphony Orchestra in December 2005.

For the past six years his teacher has been Andrew Del Riccio, who is also the Musical Director of the Mosman Orchestra.

Andrew has worked with community orchestras and ensembles since 1994 and with Mosman Orchestra since 1999. He says: 'One of the great pleasures of community music – and for me, the Mosman Orchestra – is to see how a diverse group of people can make music. Over the years, the orchestra's members have brought a vast range of different experiences to their time together: we've had doctors, lawyers, bridge-builders in India, artists, pilots, scientists. They range in age from high school students to men and women who have retired. Age and experience matter less, I think, than a love of music and performing, the willingness to take part and a desire to do one's best by the music.' ■



Ben Taylor

Community orchestras ... give up-and-coming musical stars the opportunity to play a wide range of music, both in the orchestra and as soloists