

2018 Adjudicators – West Gippsland Performing Arts Competition

Mary Johnston – Instrumental Solos Adjudicator (Strings)



After majoring in performance and composition at Sheffield University, Mary Johnston gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Orchestral Studies in London training with renowned conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Lorin Maazel, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Colin Davis, Sir John Elliot Gardner, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Vernon Handley, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Vilém Tauský and Gennady Rozhdestvensky. She studied violin with Peter Cropper from the Lindsay String Quartet and Rosemary Furniss from the Nash Ensemble, St. Martin in the Fields and assistant teacher to Ivan Galamian.

After an orchestral career with the *Iceland Symphony Orchestra*, the *West Australian Symphony Orchestra* and the *Melbourne*

Symphony Orchestra for many years, Mary dedicated her energies to the education of young musicians. In 1997 as Director of Chamber Music at The Mac.Robertson Girls High School then from 2004 appointed Head of Strings at Melbourne Girls Grammar School.

As an orchestral educator she has been violin tutor for the *Melbourne* and *Percy Grainger* Youth Orchestras, conductor of the *Melbourne Youth Chamber Strings* at Melbourne Youth Music, Associate Concertmaster of the *Tasmanian Discovery Orchestra* at the University of Tasmania and violin mentor for the *Monash University Academy Orchestra*.

Mary has been Concertmaster of the *Camberwell Camerata Orchestra* for 20 years and recently formed the duo *MV2* with harpist Vanessa McKeand.

In December 2017 Mary retired from full-time teaching but continues as a private teacher and regular freelance violinist with various Melbourne ensembles. This year she has performed with the *Stonnington Symphony Orchestra*, *Citi Opera*, *Melbourne Bach Choir*, *The Art of Sound Orchestra*, chamber music with pianist Hoang Pham and continues her involvement with the *Monash Academy Orchestra* projects.

Matthew Kneale – Instrumental Solos Adjudicator (Woodwind & Brass)



A founding member of both eminent Australian chamber groups Arcadia Winds and Ensemble Françaix, Matthew Kneale is making his name as a leading bassoonist of his generation and a bold artistic thinker. He is a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music,

and in addition to critically acclaimed solo and ensemble performances, has served as Casual Bassoonist of the Melbourne, Adelaide, Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. His repertoire ranges from traditional masterpieces to the latest new compositions and commissions for bassoon by György Ligeti, Brett Dean, Paul Dean, Peter de Jager and Lachlan Skipworth, among others. In 2018, Matthew will be giving the world premiere of Holly Harrison's new work for Bassoon and String Quartet as part of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra's Australian Series.

Peter Mander – Classical Vocal Adjudicator



Peter Mander commenced his musical career as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne. After graduating from the University of Melbourne (B. Mus. Ed. & A. Mus. A), he performed with the Victorian State Opera before leaving for Germany in 1982, where he performed as a character and lyric tenor in 50 roles in opera, operetta and musicals, as well as regularly appearing as tenor soloist in concert and Lieder recitals, including all the major religious works of Bach, Haydn and Mozart. He returned to Australia in 1994.

Peter maintains a busy performance schedule, returning regularly to Germany to perform as a concert artist. Peter has been principal tenor soloist for St. Frances Church, Melbourne for the past 15 years.

His students can be found in most professional productions, in both opera and musical in Australia, Germany and England.

Most recently he has published his book "German Phonetics for Australian Singers, Accompanists, and Students of German".

Jacinta Dennett – Vocal Groups Adjudicator *and* Instrumental Ensembles Adjudicator



Jacinta Dennett is a leading Australian harpist. Her wide range of performance styles include as concerto soloist, a recitalist, an orchestral and chamber musician and a Showcase performer aboard a Japanese cruise ship. She has also played Celtic harp in a contemporary band and has teamed up with an operatic soprano in *duo Bliss!* Jacinta's performance style fuses poetry—through her heartfelt and intuitive embodiment of music, and physicality—enriched by her flamenco dance and martial arts study, which includes a national title in taekwondo.

In 2017 Jacinta toured her solo program *Threaded Stars* to Bunbury, Hong Kong, Seattle and New York City where her playing was reviewed by MetroHarp as “incredible.” *Threaded Stars* features the compositions of Australian women composers, including a newly commissioned work *Three Pieces* by Alicia Grant and two World Premiere performances. Her CD *Threaded Stars* is due for release on October 31, 2018.

Jacinta holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Music, a Bachelor of Music Performance, a Graduate Diploma of Music Performance, a Graduate Diploma of Education, a Foundation Certificate in Steiner Education, and a Master of Fine Arts.

Through her current PhD research at the University of Melbourne, Jacinta is emerging as an authority on Australian women composers. Her research has been presented across Australia and at the 13th World Harp Congress in Hong Kong, the Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, USA and the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK. Another extension of her PhD research was an ‘Australian Voices’ concert featuring Helen Gifford’s chamber music at the Melbourne Recital Centre. This celebrated performance, curated by Jacinta, was broadcast with an interview on ABC Classic FM and is available as a New Waves podcast.

Jacinta leads harp pedagogy at Australia’s most distinguished musical institutions: Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Monash University and the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. Using *Essential Gesture*—a method developed by Jacinta to illuminate the “in-between” of instrumental performing and delivered in a style her students describe as joyful—Jacinta encourages all musicians to seek improvements and solutions to their own performances by facilitating the inspired choice of actions on the part of the performer.

Bethany Simons – Speech and Drama Adjudicator



Bethany Simons is an award-winning performer, writer, producer and teaching artist based in Melbourne. Born and raised in Dubbo, NSW, Bethany completed her BA (Acting for Screen and Stage) Honours at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga.

Her original play, *The Weather and Your Health*, and cabaret comedy, *Reception: The Musical* – written in collaboration with Peter de Jager - have received four Green Room Award nominations including Best Independent Female Performer and Best New Writing for the Australian Stage. Both of her works have been published by Australian Plays and were selected for the VCE Drama Playlist (2012 & 2015). *Reception: The Musical* won Best Cabaret at the Melbourne Fringe Festival (2014).

Bethany's producing experience is extensive, having performed and toured her works with Regional Arts Victoria, Melbourne Fringe Festival and Critical Stages to over 70 locations around Australia, she was also the 2012 recipient of the RAVE Touring Award for outstanding contribution to regional arts and culture.

As a teaching artist, Bethany regularly conducts drama, playwriting and industry workshops around the country. She has appeared as a guest speaker and presenter for various events including Melbourne International Comedy Festival and the Australian National Academy of Music and has been a voice-over artist for 3MBS FM and Vision Australia Radio.

As a writer, she has developed narrator scripts for Southern Cross Soloists, and was a guest and feature columnist for AussieTheatre.com. She is currently the Program Director of Theatre Network Australia, producing events such as the Victorian Theatre Forum.

Finding her inspiration in the everyday, Bethany believes that nothing is funnier or more beautiful than real life and true stories. She is interested in characterisation, text and devising and, as a theatre-maker, is committed to creating new work for the Australian stage that is honest, uplifting and entertaining.

Wendy Todd – Contemporary Popular Vocal Adjudicator



Wendy holds both Bachelor and Masters Degrees in Music Education from the University of Melbourne and has pursued post graduate studies in conducting at the University of Oregon and UCLA. She has been a Director of Music at an Independent School for ten years, currently teaches singing at an Independent School and her own studio, and conducts two secondary choirs and an adult vocal ensemble.

Wendy teaches students of all ages and abilities from the beginner to the professional including VCE Performance both Contemporary and Classical Voice, and Music Investigation for which she has been a VCAA assessor of both for several years.

Wendy has worked extensively with vocal ensembles and choirs both as a conductor and a singer. She is often invited to adjudicate vocal and choral eisteddfods and has been a National Councillor, Victorian President and committee member for many years, of both the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (ANATS) and the Australian National Choral Association (ANCA).

She is delighted to have been asked to adjudicate at the West Gippsland Eisteddfod.

Alison Kirkpatrick – Pianoforte Adjudicator



Alison Kirkpatrick is a highly experienced, well established piano teacher who has been working in Melbourne in recent years and before that in New York, USA. She is also a performer for solo keyboard, concerto playing, chamber music and as a collaborator with other performers.

Alison graduated with two degrees in Performing and Music Education from the University of Melbourne. She was awarded First Class Honours for Piano in her final year. Subsequently she studied at Manhattan School of Music in New York, graduating with a Masters degree. Additional areas of study during this time included piano accompanying, chamber music, lieder interpretation and Spanish keyboard music.

Since returning to Australia, Alison continued performing and teaching. She has worked at tertiary, secondary and primary level. She is an examiner and has conducted masterclasses for students as well as workshops for various teacher groups. These include the Victorian Music Teachers Association of which Alison acted as a director of the state council.

Jayne McGoldrick – Parasteddfod Adjudicator



Jayne is local to the area and has been involved in music from a young age. Jayne studied piano and completed a Bachelor of Music (Therapy) at The University of Melbourne. Jayne went on to broaden her skills in this area by completing a Master's of Occupational Therapy at LaTrobe University.

Jayne has worked as an Occupational Therapist for the past ten years in a range of areas including Early Childhood Intervention, physical rehabilitation and community health. Jayne has been able to utilise her music therapy training within these roles.

Jayne is also an experienced piano teacher, with an interest in working with people with additional needs to enable them to develop their musical skills, and to use music as a tool for working towards their health or developmental goals.

Jayne is excited to be adjudicating at this year's Gippsland Parasteddfod and is looking forward to being part of the day.

Evan Jones – Instrumental Solos Adjudicator (Drum Kit)