

20/3/06

**Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600**

**4MBS Classic FM, Brisbane's classical music and jazz community FM station started broadcasting in March 1979. Over the last 27 years, the station has actively sought new and innovative ways to engage the community and support Australian but more particularly Queensland classical and jazz musicians – as part of our commitment to our local community. This strong focus on our local fine music scene is not possible for the national ABC fine music service.**

**This strong commitment to local musicians has resulted in many activities unique to 4MBS Classic FM. As a result of these activities the station was named Radio Station of the Year at the 2004 CBAA Awards- the first classical station to win this Award.**

**The General Manager of 4MBS Classic FM recently attended the 44<sup>th</sup> annual classical radio conference in Houston Texas. He was the first attendee from Australia in the 44 years of the conference. The 50 American classical stations there were amazed at the extent of 4MBS's involvement with and promotion and support of the music community and the range of activities engaging with the general community.**

**Listed below are some of the station's activities supporting Queensland musicians ...**

***4MBS Festival of Classics* - now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, is now Australia's largest classical music festival and uses only Queensland artists. The 2006 Festival has 25 performances in 15 venues using over 750 musicians including eight orchestras, choirs, chamber groups and leading Queensland musicians as soloists, leading Queensland actors and opera singers. The Festival has given many emerging Queensland artists opportunities not readily available elsewhere eg to direct an opera, conduct an orchestra, direct a play, design a set and lighting. We know of no other radio station anywhere in the world that runs such a festival.**

***4MBS Ticketing*- a low cost concert ticketing service operated by 4MBS since 2003 for local community and professional music groups, orchestras, choirs etc. 4MBS provides ticket printing, processing, credit card facilities, mailing ,promotion on-air and via our website and front of house service.**

***4MBS Classic Management*- an artists' agency operated by 4MBS to help local musicians, singers, actors, directors etc find employment. Recent bookings include contracting a Queensland singer for the lead female role in the Shanghai production of Phantom of the Opera.**

***Annual Classic Concerts Cruise-*** since 1996 we've operated an annual 7 day cruise of the South Pacific with Queensland classical musicians performing concerts each day.

***4MBS Concert Recording Team*** – a team of eight recordists who record about 150 concerts a year mainly of local performers not recorded by the ABC. The concerts are broadcast each Friday evening from 8pm to 10pm and other times.

***4MBS Record Label-*** each year 4MBS releases CD's of local performers using our own recordings.

***Student prizes and scholarships-*** each year for the last 20 years 4MBS has presented three tertiary student music prizes (UQ, Conservatorium, QUT). We have helped create two new scholarships for deserving young musicians- The Clancy Violin Award and the John Farrell Trumpet Scholarship.

***MBS Young Performer of the Year*** - a national competition with an entrant from each state selected by each state's MBS radio station. Prize is \$10,000 donated by Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Two years ago our Queensland entrant won- a wonderful boost for the career of a young Queensland soprano.

***Young and emerging artists*** – 4MBS has a range of activities and on-air programs that support and encourage young and emerging Queensland artists. These include Kids Classics, Youngspace, Music L Plates, Musicians in Residence. Kids Classics programs go to air 5 days a week and are researched ,prepared and presented by young music lovers from ages 12 to 18 years. The monthly Youngspace features performances by school ensembles and young performers. Music L Plates is a joint initiative with the Coorparoo Secondary College as part of their music extension program for Grade 11 students- they research and present a half hour classical music feature as part of their music subject.

***Access to the airwaves-*** 4MBS provides airtime and production facilities for a dozen radio programs for local music organizations.

***Music for Brisbane-*** half hour weekly arts interview program, *Music Diary* – three times daily local concert listing. *Concert Preview-* one hour weekly concert promotion program.

***Streaming-*** we stream our programs via our website and now have listeners in Canada, South Africa and other locations worldwide.

We also run Music Appreciation Classes, a Summer School for music lovers of all ages and a radio program specifically for retirement villages and nursing homes.

All of these activities are operated by a team of 300 volunteers and 4 full time and 3 part time staff. The volunteers ages range from 12 to 80 years and they are involved in all areas of station activities. There is an equal number of males and females.

As part of our commitment to providing experience for future arts workers we regularly have young people on traineeships and work placement programs- there are currently 6. They gain experience in broadcasting but also events management through our festival, concerts, residencies etc. These trainees are well respected in the industry because of the breadth of their experience with the station.

**4MBS Classic FM works closely with the Brisbane City Council and Arts Queensland to highlight our local talent.**

**All of these activities happen because we are a community radio station dedicated to our local music community and actively pursuing opportunities to use our broadcasts to help the local music scene.**

**The level of our activities supporting local music necessitates constant fundraising activities throughout the year- radiothons, raffles, concerts, bus trips, record sales, book sales, cruises etc. Organising these fund raising events consumes the time and energy of almost all the staff.**

**This effectively limits the amount of time we can devote to developing our support of local music and creates strain on the staff. Adequate funding would free the staff to help the station achieve its aims relating to local musicians, conductors, actors, producers, lighting designers etc contributing to a more vital and sustainable arts scene in our region.**

**Gary Thorpe,  
General Manager,  
4MBS CLASSIC FM.**