



Sydney Call-Out for Ex-Cons

A search has been mounted by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music to track down some 2,000 former students who, 20 years on, are now eligible for Alumnus status.

The “missing” musicians and teachers include people who either completed tertiary courses or left early for one reason or another prior to 1990 – the year The Con officially joined forces with the University of Sydney.

Some of the scholars – covering full and part-timers and straddling performance, research, theory, history and composition - date back to the early 1920s.

Bill Boldiston is one of the first 150 “ex Cons” tracked down, and will be attending the inaugural Recognition Ceremony in the Great Hall at the University of Sydney next February.

Bill, who recently turned 80, studied clarinet and theory part-time for five years in the 1960s, but economic circumstances meant he couldn't complete the specialist teacher (music) course or the Diploma of Education because there were no evening courses available back then.

“This is a kind and thoughtful gesture for students of a bygone era,” comments Bill, who was a mature-age student back then, with a job as a draftsman with the Post Master General's Department and a father of three.

“For a number of reasons Engineering studies overtook music, but music was dear to me then and has remained dear to me ever since, especially in the jazz area, which is why this opportunity to become an Alumnus is very special.”

Since retiring in 1985 and moving to Leura in the Blue Mountains, Bill's passion for playing and listening to music has seen him:

- Convert the derelict Medlow Bath Post Office into a popular performance space.
- Issue a CD commemorating many live recitals held in this space.
- Play jazz at many fund-raiser concerts at the Norman Lindsay Gallery on behalf of the National Trust.
- Organise, arrange and perform gratis at the Bathhouse Jazz Concerts at Mount Wilson for 14 years.
- Deliver lectures on Australian jazz in both Sydney and the Blue Mountains.
- Write and publish the book “Sydney's Jazz and other Joys of its Vintage Years” together with 70 performance tracks on three CDs.

Barbara Hale (nee Campbell), of Avoca, has also signed on for what she terms a “long anticipated honour.”

Barbara studied violin fulltime at The Con in 1954-55 after attending the Conservatorium High School in 1945-46, and later completed a one year study program in Vienna.

Her first teaching position was at Abbotsleigh College. She was asked to tutor Knox Grammar's then one and only violin student, and during that stint met her husband Douglas, a maths teacher at the school.

“This is a nice acknowledgement and I will certainly be telling friends of mine who are also eligible,” said Barbara.





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The Dean and Principal of The Con, **Professor Kim Walker**, said: “Hopefully we can track down all of these former students and bestow on them the honour they deserve.

“These are people who made The Con what it is today. We cherish them and value their contribution and we are delighted that so many of them are still able to enjoy our celebrations and our concerts.”

All those graduates attending Recognition Ceremonies during 2010 will receive a special certificate and also be guests at a Champagne Reception and a Reunion Concert.

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