



FROM THE HEADMASTER

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A Tribute to Mr Harley Mead

M.Mus.St, B.Ed, B.Teach, LTCL, AMusA, CMusA, (submitted thesis for the award of PhD)

Former Director of Performance, Wind Orchestra, Wind Ensemble and Voiceworx - Toowoomba Grammar School

Harley Mead worked nationally and internationally as a composer, conductor and music educator. He worked with groups across the United Kingdom, Asia, Uganda and Europe. His compositions for instrumental and choral ensembles have been widely performed and he received commissions from organisations including the Queensland Music Festival, Brisbane Festival, the Australian National Choral Association (ANCA) Honours Programme and the Australian Boys' Choir.

Harley's work as a music educator has been recognised in a variety of ways including an Australia Day Award, two awards from the National Excellence in Teaching Committee and an Award for 'Innovative Education' presented by the Australian Society for Music Education (ASME). For a number of years Harley was engaged in part-time Doctoral studies at the University of Queensland. He had submitted his PhD thesis in September 2014 on "Creative Boys - How Boys Invent, Improvise, Innovate and 'Imagine'".

Harley joined Toowoomba Grammar School in January 2011 as a Primary School Teacher of Year 7. He came to us from Scone Grammar School where he was the Director of Music. Previous appointments included Director of Music at Moreton Bay College from 2004-2008 and Music Co-ordinator at Sheldon College, 2002-2004 and also Artist in Residence at this school in 2009.

As a Year 7 teacher at Toowoomba Grammar School in 2011 Harley immediately made his mark. He totally engaged with his class and many worshipped him, clearly evidenced at the Year 7 graduation dinner of 2011. At that time, staff in the Junior School were mesmerized by the Year 7 'drum line' he created for the function. We were also amazed by his creativity and talent as Director of an outstanding Junior School musical, *The Lion King*, in 2011.

In January 2012 I created a new position in the Performing Arts at the School, namely Director of Performance. Harley's professional experience was ideally suited to this role, one he performed with distinction until his resignation from the School in August 2014.

The Staff of Toowoomba Grammar School witnessed a true master-class performance from Harley when, for the first time, he encouraged the entire Senior School to sing a complex African song for the inter-House singing competition. Teachers were spell-bound when we saw Harley weave his magic to get over 900 teenage boys from regional, rural and remote Australia sing with gusto. We as teachers were in total awe of his display of charisma, energy and passion on stage. His commanding presence made it appear an effortless task to bring out the very best musical performance from such a large group of students.

Harley was always reluctant to inform his colleagues of his achievements both at Toowoomba Grammar School, Australia and overseas. His achievements over his career were far too numerous to list fully. I have selected just a few to illustrate such extraordinary talent:

- Presenter at the National Male Voice Festival Brisbane, April 2011. This included the preparation of a 48 page research document on Boys at School and Vocal Ensembles. The first 22 pages of this work related to the general brain development in boys. The remainder of the academic paper referred to the group singing environment. The document and the research supporting it gained significant attention in the male music-making community.
- 2011 guest conductor of the African Children's Choir, Uganda.
- Elected President of the Australian National Choral Association (ANCA) Qld/NT from November 2012.
- Guest conductor at the National Choral Summer School for Gondwana Voices in Sydney, January 2013. Chorally speaking, this is widely regarded as the finest programme in the country.
- Part-time choral conductor at the Glennie School 2012.
- Private composer for Ipswich Grammar School for the School's sesquicentenary.
- Toowoomba Region Chorus Master for the Opera Queensland production of La Boheme, 2014

In my time with Harley I am aware that he also won at least one international award but he did not permit me to inform the School Community of such achievement.

Harley's resignation from Toowoomba Grammar School in August 2014 allowed him to complete his Doctorate and he was looking forward to freelance composition and conducting both throughout Australia and overseas. Tragically Harley passed away on Thursday 25 September 2014.

On behalf of all staff, boys, parents and friends of the School, I pay this tribute to Mr Harley Mead. Harley was dedicated to enriching the social and cultural world of the boys of this School. It is clearly apparent to all that he profoundly raised the profile and the quality of music throughout our School. Many of us had not previously witnessed such a command performance and feel it is unlikely we will ever do so again. Harley truly had an international presence and we were blessed to have him spend time with us.

The thoughts and prayers of all at Toowoomba Grammar School go to Harley's immediate family including his three sons, Tiernan, Michael and Finbar, and to all wider family members, colleagues, friends, students and parents. Harley Mead clearly made an impact on us, and with such professional respect and admiration we had for Harley comes immense sorrow with our loss.



Peter B. Hauser

Headmaster

Toowoomba Grammar School

25 September, 2014