



# LYCO NEWS

This bimonthly newsletter is for members of the orchestra community. We welcome your articles, news, contributions and all suggestions. For items, including musical coming events, please email [Newsletter@lyco.org.au](mailto:Newsletter@lyco.org.au)

## In this edition

- The coronavirus epidemic has put a stop to LYCO rehearsals and concerts for now, but we're discovering new ways to connect, play and make music from inside our homes
- A great time to try new things - LYCO Musical Director Margaret Hoban on the bright side of the unexpected break from Friday rehearsals
- Meet our Catastrophic Orchestra - the music, fun, improvised instruments and sartorial elegance

THE LAUNCESTON  
YOUTH AND  
COMMUNITY  
ORCHESTRA (LYCO)  
EXISTS SO THAT PEOPLE  
OF ALL AGES AND  
MUSICAL ABILITIES CAN  
ENJOY PLAYING  
ORCHESTRAL MUSIC  
TOGETHER

## A GREAT TIME TO TRY NEW THINGS - LYCO Musical Director Margaret Hoban on making music in the age of COVID-19

Hello all LYCO members, I was listening to the Catastrophic Orchestra YouTube clip of the Hornpipe and Telemann, seeing the tiny pictures of participants and just enjoying that little bit and remembering just how rich music makes us. Playing together is such a deep connection. I'm missing you and your faces!



It seems a long time ago that rehearsals wound up, and that was done without really saying 'see you on the other side'. The June LYCO concert is cancelled of course, and we still have no idea when rehearsals might start up. My thought is that the committee will try to be as clear and unconfusing as possible and this year will be what it is. Further outlook unsettled!

So ... I thought I'd talk a little about what this odd time of isolation has been for me. Staying in touch and hearing each other's thoughts is an important part of that.

I have 'run away' from music for a bit - which wasn't my plan at all. I am in Australia because once before, I 'ran away' from music, being greedy and wanting way too much of my life! I know that to change leads to new excitement and creative energy in me, so it is unknown, but good.

My time is being spent pottering in the garden, long walks, sitting and looking at the fire, reading (maybe) and doing little things slowly with attention - giving myself permission to stop.

Why did it start? I found myself knowing that I love and am energised by what I do, but was dreading the return to being so busy. Dread is not a good way to approach music, so I have to look at how I organise my life so I can be less busy, but still do the invigorating work that I love.

## A Brief History of LYCO's Catastrophic Orchestra

Within days of the Covid-19 pandemic halting LYCO activities, a new idea started to circulate. LYCO violinist Natalie Burch suggested “what about an asynchronous orchestra? A lot of work, but could be good if enough people were interested,” she said. The abrupt end to Friday rehearsals and the cancellation of LYCO's mid-year concert and Winter Orchestral Workshop, although necessary, had left a hole. Enthusiasm for Natalie's idea from conductors Margaret Hoban and Fraser Deeth and a bunch of LYCO players saw the quick creation of the Catastrophic Orchestra.

Before announcing the project, the musical and technical possibilities were considered and, fortunately, LYCO's technical wizards seemed to find solutions for every difficulty. Margaret suggested the traditional ‘College Hornpipe’ as an achievable starting point. Violist, Michael Horton transcribed the score and, using Soundslice software synced the musical score together with audio and video, to guide players in practicing and performing the Hornpipe. Violinist Sarah Stagg suggested the community sport software, Team App, as a secure free home for the Catastrophic Orchestra's scores, documents, videos, events, and discussions. Fraser and Michael shared the work of combining everyone's recordings into a unified whole.

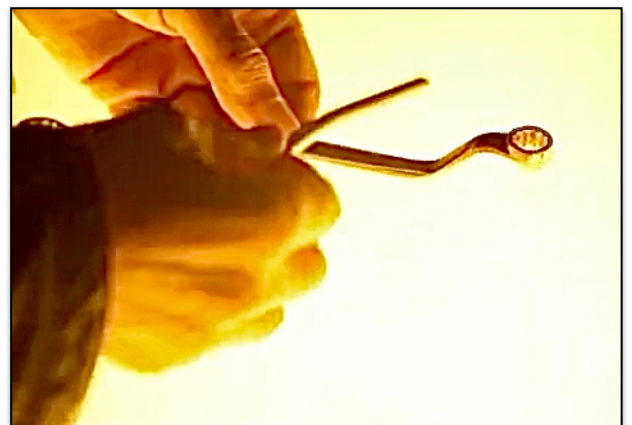


After testing the new system, Fraser Deeth launched the Catastrophic Orchestra online. “Hullo everyone, welcome to this exciting online land!”, he said. “I hope you are all well and happy! And practicing!! We’ve got more info about the TCO project and how it works coming soon!” Fraser encouraged LYCO members to join, explore Team App, download music, practice, and record themselves playing their part of the orchestra piece.

Players seemed overwhelmingly positive and keen to get involved. “Hi everyone! Missing our weekly get together. Looking forward to this new experience!” clarinetist Lucy Hay said. Diana Burrage responded similarly, saying “Hello. Feeling rusty and looking forward to hearing more about this playing opportunity.” The members page of Team App was soon populated with photos of players with their instruments, animals, moustaches, and sartorial splendour.

Getting people to record themselves and upload their recordings “especially if not used to it, will be the tricky bit,” Fraser Deeth said, “But that can be part of the fun!”, he added, wanting to support anyone willing to have a go. Seeing the need for a clear guide for getting started, Michael Horton produced a “Recording Music” and a “Sharing Your Music” document for players. These excellent step by step guides are available to anyone curious or uncertain about how to get involved.

In keeping with the aims of the Catastrophic Orchestra, players are encouraged to be daring and have fun. The music is being adapted, with simpler parts on offer, and some parts being transcribed for instruments in different keys. Players are being encouraged to substitute for any missing instruments. And where percussion instruments are missing, some stunning alternatives have been found in Ron Brown’s workshop.



The Catastrophic Orchestra’s first piece is a wonderful merging of distinct parts. You can watch the College Hornpipe here: <https://bit.ly/35WEF1S>. In addition to the Hornpipe, a Telemann Gavotte, Tchaikovsky’s Neapolitan Dance and series of pieces by Kabalevsky are in the works.

## **“The Perfect Wrong Note” by Garry Billing**

Given my professed expertise in wrong-noting, the title of the book “The Perfect Wrong Note” grabbed me immediately. I’ve found it a positive read. Wrong notes shouldn’t be wasted, says author and pianist William Westney. If we simply gloss over mistakes they tend to become habitual, whereas by paying closer attention to what’s causing the slip-ups they can become invitations to greater learning. This means deliberately noticing, pausing, analysing and then correcting - an intentional process leading to sounder technical and musical results.

The imposed social isolation of COVID 19 is giving me an opportunity to focus on this kind of practice. During this temporary reprieve from learning regular orchestral and chamber music repertoire, I’ve decided to pare down my daily cello routine to a couple of pieces and to basic scales and arpeggios. I’m working on the third Bach Suite in C Major and the beautiful A minor sonata of Miaskovsky. Plenty of “juicy” wrong note possibilities for me there! Also great opportunities for growth when I put my mind to detailed practice! In terms of scales, I’m back to basics and quite enjoying slow bowing leading (hopefully) to better sound production. At present I’m avoiding open strings (except to check intonation periodically) and doing four octaves in order to improve fluency over the whole instrument. At least, this is the theory!

I guess we all know what it’s like to plod along for a while wondering if we’ll ever improve. And then, unexpectedly and inexplicably, things can step up a to a satisfying new level. Thus one’s development sometimes happens incrementally and apparently by osmosis. At potentially more significant times it is likely to be the fruit of an intentional and enlightened regime of practice.

“Perfect” wrong notes are the ones I allow to focus my attention in order that I might figure out better solutions and consolidate sounder technique. I am resolved not to ignore them but to accept their implicit invitation to grow as a player.

## EVENTS & RESOURCES

**Classical music concerts in Tasmania have been cancelled until at least August in Tasmania. However, here is a selection of other current events and activities.**

Sunday 17th May 5pm. Final Catastrophic Orchestra deadline for recordings of Telemann Gavotte. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/2WQUEdT>

Sunday 17th May 5pm. First Catastrophic Orchestra recordings of Tchaikovsky's Neapolitan Dance due. <https://bit.ly/2WQUEdT>

A collection of excellent live streamed events. <https://bit.ly/3btMgXd>

AMEB online courses for Grades 1 to 3 Theory of Music are now free until June 30. <https://bit.ly/3cufZR4>

Concert halls, musicians and audiences embrace live-streaming - some interesting things to tune into on the web. <http://bit.ly/3d9yNFP>

Gondwana National Choral School is presenting a spectacular series of weekly Zoom classes over the next eight weeks. <https://bit.ly/2yVA04r>

Monday 1st June: Closing date for the Fanfare Competition for young people aged 12-21 with 'something to say' to compose a 30 second composition. <https://bit.ly/2YYKniA>

Self-isolating choirs and orchestras performing powerful at-home concerts during coronavirus outbreak. <https://bit.ly/2YLowel>

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Daily Dose. <https://bit.ly/2WsVDCc>

The AMEB is offering video exams for most instruments, while planning for face to face exams ASAP after July. <https://bit.ly/2WNdbI2>

17 - 25 January 2021 - The 31st Residential Summer String Camp, Camp Clayton, Ulverstone. <http://www.lyco.org.au/rssc/>

## INTERESTING ARTICLES

25 Reasons To Thank a Music Teacher. <http://bit.ly/2Sw7Y5m>

A conspiracy theory about the way we tune musical instruments that even involves the Nazis. <http://bit.ly/2UBVSu3>

How Many Emotions Can Music Make You Feel? <http://bit.ly/39JMpWm>

Our ears have automatic gain control built in. <http://bit.ly/35h66CQ>

Practising more while you're in lockdown? Here's how to do it sustainably. <https://bit.ly/2LuIqSN>

Social Distancing and rehearsing. <https://bit.ly/2LqIS4w>

Tasmanian earworm goes viral <https://ab.co/35VqOsH>

Tasmanian violist, Jo St Leon's Pandemic Diary. <https://bit.ly/2WqOr9u>

Van Diemen's Band artist in the time of COVID-19. <https://bit.ly/2yRyXm1>

What to do when you are 'Zoom'ed Out'. <https://bit.ly/3dsqapd>

We hope you've enjoyed this newsletter. If you have any ideas for the coming edition, we welcome your articles, contributions, news and all suggestions. Please contribute items, including musical events to: [Newsletter@lyco.org.au](mailto:Newsletter@lyco.org.au)

