

Music '09: modulations

from Graeme Wallis



This issue of Sound Arts celebrates the many of the highlights of the recent national music education conference *Music '09 Modulations* held from Monday 6th July – Friday 10th July 2009 in the city of Christchurch. Featured here are summaries of keynote addresses, papers, workshops and recitals with reflections from some of the conference participants. The conference, organised by MEC (Music Education Canterbury) on behalf of MENZA, was hailed as a great success by both national and international participants.

The theme "Modulations" provided a great springboard for contributor's ideas. This immediately evident in the opening keynote address by Cambridge University's Dr Pamela Burnard, who's stimulating paper *Modulating pedagogical spaces for creativity and innovation in music education* provoked some interesting responses and debate. "Modulations" proved to be a unique focus for the conference. Divided into seven strands - modulating for learning, modulating musical pathways, modulating our musical practices, modulating our musical selves, modulating musical cultures, modulating for music and modulating through media and technologies - the theme provided a wide ranging response with over fifty papers and workshops presented and an absorbing recital programme.

Other international papers included *Making moving music: How innate rhythms of life become fabulous art in sound* by Colwyn Trevarthen (University of Edinburgh), *Arts assessment for a creative future* by Samuel Leong (Hong Kong Institute of Education), *Persuading the Government: Strategic advocacy for music education* by Richard Letts (Music Council of Australia) and *The point of the baton* by John Hopkins (Australia) who launched his book of the same name.

Music '09 followed *Il est bel et bon*, New Zealand's first Research in Music Education Conference and the 31st Australia New Zealand Association for Research in Music Education (ANZARME) Conference which was held at the Boat Shed in Akaroa from Friday 3rd July – Monday 6th July. This gave opportunities for music educationalists from both Australia and New Zealand to attend two conferences and it was encouraging to have a number of Australians attend *Music '09* and contribute presentations.

A stunning performance programme featured the New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir (conducted by Andrew Withington) the NZTrio (featuring a premiere performance of the work *Su Xie Si Ti (Four Sketches)* by Gao Ping) and the National Youth Orchestra (conducted by Paul Daniel).

There was also a wide variety of performances from many local community and school groups throughout the conference, adding a further colourful dimension to the activities. Featured also was the inclusion of a youth strand, which gave opportunities for music making. The North West Marimba Group from Auckland joined with local players to workshop and present items for conference delegates.

One of the great advantages of attending a music conference is the ability to network with other music educators. The organising committee recognised this and provided quality time for delegates to meet and share experiences. A substantial trades display by local and national music providers was an added bonus for both retailers and users. For those interested in retail therapy the venue was conveniently within the central city centre of Christchurch, providing ready access to local services.

Music '09 was planned over a period of two years by a twenty-strong local organising committee, which worked with supreme dedication to make a successful conference. This was a challenging task, particularly in light of the global recession, which made its influence felt throughout the planning stages. Despite this, the committee was a powerhouse of energy and the willing contribution of each member was superb.

A **CD of Conference Proceedings** will be available October-November. These will be distributed free to conference delegates and at a cost of \$25.00 to others who may be interested. Please contact me on graeme.wallis@canterbury.ac.nz for more information.

As you read the summaries of keynote addresses, papers, workshops and recitals with reflections from some of the conference participants, I challenge you to consider attending the next national music education. I am sure that it will be another landmark event not to be missed. See you there!

Graeme Wallis is Principal Lecturer in the School of Literacies and Arts in Education at the University of Canterbury. His main interests have developed around community music activities. For ten years he was Musical Director of the Christchurch School of Music and he is currently president of the Christchurch Civic Music Council and also president of the Specialist Music Performance Programme which caters for talented young music students. He was chairperson for Music '09. His research interests and publications have focused mainly in the field of community music activity and more recently the topic of morality and music education. His other area of research publications is in children's literature. He enjoys performing, reviewing and occasionally composing.