



ArtSound Incorporated

ABN 29 083 850 739

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

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This report from the ArtSound Board of Management covers the 2020/21 calendar year, and should be read in conjunction with the financial statements and auditor's report.

Executive Summary

With the year 2020 being such a difficult one, it is good to know that 2021 has shown improvements. The station has increased its membership and volunteers, and more diverse programs and music are being put to air.

During the COVID lockdown ArtSound was lucky to receive pre-recorded programs that our presenters had prepared at home. By the end of the year we were presenting a Monday to Friday Senior Memories Hour live from the studios, as well as Arts Café at lunch times. Many other presenters were coming back into the studio to record or present their shows and there was an atmosphere of anticipation. Things were happening and it started to show.

We were fortunate to have three political visits during the end of last year and the beginning of 2021. Alicia Payne, the Federal member for Canberra was most impressed with what ArtSound has been achieving, and both Peter Cain and Tara Cheyne of the ACT Legislative Assembly were amazed at the studios and what we do. Having a good relationship with politicians is always beneficial, and being a known entity makes contact when needed easier.

Before and after last year's AGM the Board held Strategic Meetings to come up with ideas for improving ArtSound programs, increasing membership, and generating a larger pool of volunteers as well as annual income. These concepts have been put into place, and results are being achieved.

We are all aware how finances were affected by COVID. Like many other community organisations, ArtSound found it hard to gain new sponsors, although the costs of keeping the station on air 24 hours a day remained the same. The on-air fundraiser conducted in May and June 2020 helped to lift the balances and our very successful Music Trivia night earlier this year also boosted our income. The time and effort put into these two events have been acknowledged by the Board as fantastic results and of great assistance to our funds. But the greatest income provider has been Audio Services.

The quality of the ArtSound studios has been advantageous when it comes to promoting recording. Although a staple earner at the end of 2020, since the beginning of this year ArtSound has been regularly used for recording podcast interviews, and musicians paying to have their voice or instrument recorded. We have Liam O'Connell to thank for the effort he has put into assisting with this. But the big one was the use of the recording studios booked for over ten days to record an audio book. Fifteen hours of reading with fifteen hours of editing was a huge endeavour, not only for the author and reader, Hugh Mackay, but also for Chris Deacon and Peter Monaghan who were there at every session. A great effort recognised and appreciated by the Board.

You might remember last year ArtSound was chosen to hold the finals of the Young Virtuoso of the Year, here in Canberra. Unfortunately the competition didn't take place, but we are happy to say that this year, although ArtSound is not holding the finals, the competition is happening and ArtSound will be looking for the Canberra Young Virtuoso to represent us at the finals in Melbourne later this year. This will be the first year that Annabel Wheeler will not be at the helm. The Board, ever mindful of the work involved in organising this event, is greatly indebted to Annabel for her efforts over the past several years. Hers are big shoes to fill.

Those of you who have visited the studios this year will have noticed we now have a reception desk in the foyer. The newly established Welcoming Committee has given a new atmosphere to the studios and makes it easier for visitors to gain entry; now the on-air presenter does not have to leave the broadcast studio to let visitors in. The Welcoming Committee not only offers visitors an introduction to ArtSound; it provides new volunteers with an introduction to who we are and what we do. The new Committee members soon find their niche at ArtSound and move on to assist in other sectors, while the next intake of volunteers take their place.

Sponsorships are the easiest and smartest way for ArtSound to make money. While the studios were in lock down, there was no sponsorship income. Thankfully the tide is turning, but The Board is working on a system of getting every ArtSound member to gain us one sponsor this year. Just think, if each one of our 100+ members found us a sponsor who took out a Bronze Sponsorship Package of \$400 (which would provide them with 40 sponsorship announcements over three weeks), that would bring us \$40,000, keeping the station alive for 4 months. Yes, it costs \$10,000 per month to keep ArtSound on air.

There is no doubt 2020 was a bad year. But everyone was in the same boat. This year, 2021, has started well and is promising to lead us back to being the best known community radio station in Canberra and known for its involvement with the arts.

Arts Café has grown in stature during the last few months. More presenters and more interviews are highlighting what ArtSound can do for the arts community. In its turn the arts community has assisted ArtSound by providing us with some really interesting and unusual interviews from all genres. By providing them with an outlet where they can promote their presentations, skills, and sales, ArtSound has increased its listening audience, especially as Arts Café is repeated each afternoon, and Neil Doody also presents Arts About every Sunday afternoon.

All this success would not be achieved without our volunteers. Since the resignation of Joseph Heys at the end of last year, ArtSound no longer has paid staff. But because the station is reliant on our volunteers, all our volunteers have stepped up to the challenge and are assisting in pulling ArtSound out of the mire. We are not there yet. We still need an improvement in finances but the Board is working hard to establish new ideas and feel sure we will get there.

With the support of our volunteers the Board believes the future is safe and greatly appreciates all the efforts everyone is putting into improving the station and its status.

Thank you one and all.

Julie Finch-Scally
ArtSound FM Board Secretary

ArtSound AGM 2021 President's Report

Due to COVID-19, ArtSound FM's AGM in 2020 was held in late July rather than the first half of the year as was previously the case. This means it has only been 10 months since the last AGM but a great deal has happened at ArtSound since the last AGM. However, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank Brian Leonard for his role of Returning Officer for his previous service and for conducting the electoral process for this AGM, and Terry Giesecke for continuing in his role as Public Officer of ArtSound.

At the last AGM we elected a new Board. This was the first time an election was held for some years and the result was a board with good balance in terms of gender, range of skills, and age. The Board has worked harmoniously and very effectively for the 10 months since the AGM and a great deal has been achieved which is discussed later in this report. I would like to thank all members of the Board for their hard work and support during this time.

Unfortunately, there have been three resignations from the Board since the last AGM. Patricia Georgee resigned in February 2021 to concentrate on some family health issues. Our Treasurer, Daniel Prior, resigned in March 2021 due to his heavy work commitment, and Sarah Grey resigned effective in April to take up a music course in Sydney, for which she had the Board's support. Daniel proved to be a very strategic treasurer and also chaired our strategic planning meetings with great skill. He will sorely be missed. Sarah did a tremendous job in updating our website and helping build our online presence on the internet and social media. She was an excellent asset to the Board and ArtSound more generally. The Board would like to express its thanks to Patricia, Daniel and Sarah for their dedication and contribution to ArtSound and for helping ArtSound moving forward in accordance with our strategic priorities.

In the 10 months I have been President, I have met and worked with a number of volunteers and presenters and had the opportunity to see and assess what they do for ArtSound. I have no hesitation in saying that they are the heart and soul of this organisation. It is their dedication, commitment and the hours they put into keeping us on the air, providing a range of interesting and engaging programs to our listeners, working on grant applications, and generally putting in place processes and procedures necessary to keep the organisation going, paying our bills and ensuring compliance with all our obligations as an incorporated association and as a licensed community broadcaster. This has become more demanding this year as we lost our last paid staff member, Joseph Heys, in December 2020. I would like to thank everyone who works at ArtSound in any role for the tremendous work they do for ArtSound. It is greatly appreciated.

I normally do not single out individuals for special mention because I appreciate how much work everyone does. However, there are some of our volunteers who put in hours and their time beyond the call of duty and I would like to thank each of them here:

- Chris Deacon for the work he has done in keeping the station on air, training everyone to use our systems, resolving issues, often at very difficult times, helping presenters with technology upgrades, providing audio services, helping with the installation of the NBN, writing grant applications, assisting in fundraising, program presentation and many other things;
- Peter Monahan for his work in supporting Chris, his recording and program presentation work, his work with volunteers and the Program Committee, writing grant applications and being involved in most things;
- Gabe Caddy and the Program Committee for working diligently on our programming and planning, and the changes they are bringing to our program line-up;
- Julie Finch-Scally for her tireless work as Board Secretary and helping to coordinate our volunteers and inducting new volunteers;
- Judy Baker for coming back to the fold and helping to restore our administrative systems and processes, including volunteer scheduling and sponsor liaison.

I know this is probably unfair because there are many others who do tremendous work for ArtSound. If I have missed anyone, please accept my apologies. I do not mean to devalue your contribution in any way, and I thank everyone for their efforts and commitment to ArtSound.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on ArtSound's behalf, to pay tribute, to our dearly departed volunteer and presenter Phil Birch-Marston, whose valued on-air contribution each week for almost three decades must definitely be acknowledged. Our thoughts go out to his family.

ArtSound was fortunate to receive official visits from Alicia Payne and Tara Cheyne. They were impressed with the studios and what ArtSound is achieving. They both offered assistance and hopefully we can look forward to meaningful relationships in the future.

During the past year PhotoAccess and ArtSound have worked closer together. Equipment has been shared and assistance given in various ways. The PhotoAccess Open Day, where we provided sound and equipment, was an unexpected success for ArtSound in that we gained new members and volunteers amongst many visitors who discovering ArtSound for the first time. PhotoAccess, the lessee of the ArtSound studios and admin buildings, have been very supportive of ArtSound over the years. Sharing the Arts Centre with them has been a great benefit to ArtSound.

I think there are good signs that we have moved ahead as an organisation. A number of former presenters have re-joined and are now presenting programs for ArtSound once again. We are increasing our membership steadily which is also a good sign that we are reaching out to our listeners. We are moving forward in a more collaborative way that is engaging our members. We still have much to do in that regard. I have made clear to any former presenters and members who left the organisation [because of past issues] that they would be welcomed back as long as they share our ideals and are committed to our strategic aspirations moving forward.

There have been many achievements over the last 10 months which demonstrate a great deal of potential for ArtSound. I will let Gabe highlight the things that the Program Committee has put into place but in summary these are as follows:

- We have started a new collaboration with the ANU School of Music to record and present a series of classical music and jazz performances by students at the school;
- We are in the process of re-establishing the “Sounds Early” program in some form that is currently being trialled;
- We have further developed our arts content and introduced other new programs;
- We are in the process of developing a program covering music and issues of interest to young persons. This is due in part to the interest being shown in ArtSound by young people and we now are pleased to have several young new members and volunteers;
- We are in the process of developing possible collaborations between major arts institutions in the ACT and ArtSound to promote the shows at the National Gallery and for potential audio services. More on this in the next few months;
- We have been engaged in discussions with 1CMS, Canberra’s multicultural community radio station, about ways of sharing resources, volunteers and collaborating on music recording and the production of new programs for CMS. These are in their early stages.
- We would also like to re-introduce our “Break into Broadcasting” vacation courses which proved to be so successful among young students over the years (let us know if you would like to get involved).

There are other projects in their planning stages which, if they can be put in place, promise a bright future for ArtSound.

Another set of initiatives that the Board has supported are more social and intended to engage more members in what we do at ArtSound. We have now had several social gatherings at the studios including drinks and nibbles nights, a hot soup night and promoting studio tours. We would like members to come along to ArtSound, meet other members and volunteers and see the facilities their membership fees support. We plan to do more of these and include studio tours.

While all the initiatives we have undertaken are moving us in the right direction, like many community stations, we still have some major challenges ahead of us. ArtSound’s financial position continues to be a concern and we have been close to drawing on the last of our cash reserves. There are many reasons for this and the Board has been working on strategies designed to improve our financial situation. Our operating costs are somewhere around \$10,000 per month that we must find just to keep going. Some of our expenses like transmission fees simply cannot be further reduced. We are fortunate that we have no paid staff which has reduced our costs but resulted in much heavier workloads for our volunteers. Apart from some Covid emergency support, we have received virtually no grant funds for the last year to cover our core operational expenses, despite major efforts to attract same. Because of the Covid situation, sponsorships have been more difficult to find and maintain. We are

in a position where our costs have remained the same but our ability to pay for them has significantly been reduced. This is simply not sustainable.

We have seen some financial successes. Our audio services have been in greater demand and we are receiving steady income from those. Our goal is to get the value of these up to around \$10,000 per month. We recently had a trivia night fundraising event which raised \$5000. I would like to thank Brian Leonard, Judy Baker, Judy Hayes and Stuart Warner for organising and running this event which has helped our coffers. But more needs to be done, and the Board is exploring other ways of generating revenue that will go towards assisting ArtSound's financial well-being, while reducing our dependence on increasingly scarce grant funding.

The time has come for us as an organisation to determine what our future holds and what we need to do to keep operating as Canberra's community radio station focussing on music and the arts.

Wal Jurkiewicz
President

Annual Report for the Year 2020 - Program Committee

The Program Committee is charged with overseeing on-air program operations, exercising quality control over program content, and supporting program innovation. Currently its role is slightly expanded to include supporting presenter training and development.

2020 was a challenging year for programming at ArtSound, in common with every other aspect of life.

After the shutdowns due to the late 2019 refresh, and the impacts of the fires and hailstorm, the station moved into Covid-19 shutdown mode in March 2020.

The Program Committee did an audit of presenters to determine who had the skills and equipment to create pre-recorded programs from their homes, and we were able to find a number of people who could do so to keep some new content on the station.

We used this as a story to generate some publicity for the donations drive we carried out in June 2020 to gain funds for operations. (*Canberra Times*, 26 May 2020)

The fund-raiser was successfully carried out and raised about \$20,000, a good result for the station.

In June 2020 the Program Committee started work on the renewal of the program grid.

A new album-based show, **ArtSound Recorded Music Society**, playing at midday on Saturdays, commenced on 11 July 2020. This is a pre-recorded local production created by a number of ArtSound presenters who share a musical album of particular historical or personal significance.

In mid-2020, Senior Memories became part of ArtSound's regular programming stream, as a two-hour band of programming each weekday including **Senior Memories Hour** from 11am to midday. (This show was a popular feature of the 24-hour service that ArtSound was previously delivering via the Internet to subscribing retirement and nursing homes in the ACT and NSW.)

Another program has followed this path to live-to-air — **Live Archive**, hosted by Paul Conn, focuses on historic live recordings of folk, jazz, and blues artists. This plays Thursday evenings at 11pm, and is repeated on Saturday afternoons.

A new arts digest program, **Arts About**, (a summary of content from the weekday **Arts Café**), on Sundays at 1pm to follow **A Jazz Experience**, commenced on 12 July 2020. A Jazz Experience itself has been revamped and relocated in 2020 and continues to provide a valuable training slot for new presenters.

In October the Committee proposed a rearrangement of the program grid to allow space for a number of new programs. **Jazz Frontiers**, an investigation into important moments of change in jazz, commenced in October 2020. **ArtSound Radio Theatre**, a half-hour presentation of radio plays, most featuring ACT-region writers and actors, began late in 2020, and has attracted media coverage, too. This show, at 4pm on Sundays, has grown into an important cynosure for the theatre community on a Sunday afternoon, attracting a considerable number of playwrights and actors interested in reviving this almost-lost radio art form.

In November 2020 the Committee welcomed a new member in the person of John Worcester. John brings a wealth of experience to the role, and is a valuable addition to the team. The Committee grew again in early 2021, with the equally valuable

additions of Judy Baker and Eric McDonald, two long standing ArtSound all round contributors who bring long experience in admin and folk, and classical and Senior Memories, respectively.

On 1 May 2021, the Committee organised a training day for a refresher on various aspects of presentation, and this was enthusiastically taken up by the ArtSound community as a way to hone skills and catch up after a period of little direct contact. The Committee thanks all those who attended, and contributed in so many ways to this day, which was a great success. More training is planned on pre-record production, and in due course RadioBoss.

The long awaited morning show (now known as **ArtStarter**) has now come into being, with a soft start in mid May with the intention to have a full crew going into June 2021. Also planned for commencement in June 2021 is **The Good, The Bad, and The Funny**, a new music program hosted by Len Power. Recordings have begun for a series of broadcasts of live performances by ANU students and others personnel, to begin going to air shortly. Also in production are some series of themed programs curated by Bert Whelan and voiced by a variety of ArtSound volunteers. Those include, for example, one series about the concerto in classical music, and another about Australian orchestras, pianists, and singers.

The Committee continues to work on a comprehensive, exhaustive guide for volunteers about all aspects of program presentation and production.

The Committee would like to thank all who contributed to the work done in 2020 and in 2021 so far.

Finally, the Committee notes with great sadness the loss of an important member of our community since the last AGM: Phil Birch-Marston (“Philby”), in May 2021. With Philby’s passing we mark the loss of an original ArtSound member and presenter from our earliest days, and he will be sadly missed. ArtSound held an on-air memorial — ‘Phil Birch-Marston Day at ArtSound’ – during the days after he passed away.

Gabe Caddy
Program Committee Chair

Technology Manager's Report

2020/21 saw some continuation of station upgrades and limited development of ArtSound's facilities, although many projects were postponed due to health issues affecting the writer, the lengthy impact of the pandemic, and an austere financial environment.

Due to the pandemic lockdown, which restricted normal access to the studios, offsite technical resources were diverted towards assisting the Board in drafting grant applications and implementing an emergency remote broadcasting strategy, both of which were considered essential to keeping the station on air.

Concerning the former, ArtSound was unsuccessful in its various bids to obtain Development and Operations funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation. Among technical items sought were a new transmitter (as replacement for the temporary damaged unit that had surpassed its useful lifetime), upgrades to outside broadcast equipment, a device to monitor our DAB+ service and webstreams, and transmission rent and energy subsidies for our broadcast sites at Black Mountain and Mt Taylor.

The emergency broadcasting strategy was developed in a matter of days following studio lockdown and comprised two components. The first required establishing the capability to replicate studios off site (such as in a volunteer's bedroom) from where programs could originate live. While this was implemented and trialled successfully at two stations, at the end of the day, it was not needed at ArtSound. Second, a method of prerecording programs and transferring them to the studios via Cloud-based methods for subsequent automated broadcast proved to be the preferred method throughout the worst phases of the pandemic. A number of presenters took advantage of this by establishing their own home production facilities based on my recommendations; others braved the usual studios.

Meanwhile I set up a complete replica of ArtSound's automated program software at my home. Coupled with the above technique of program pre-recording, broadcasting service was maintained. Indeed I am pleased to report that, during the reporting period, we have maintained our transmissions at 100% uptime.

Technical development work at the studios has progressed during the year with the upgrade of Studio 2 to permit podcast recording. Thanks to a Commonwealth Government grant, a new podcast mixer/recorder has been purchased and speakers installed. Studio 4, previously used for an international audio archive preservation project, has been vacated and will serve as a future training/meeting room. An additional grant towards our Senior Memories program initiative secured a range of wireless digital recording equipment and interview microphones.

A second network attached storage device (NAS) was purchased as backup to our main NAS file storage facility. It will be located off site in due course.

Negotiations with our Internet service provider, Infinite Networks, have been progressing for some months to install two new NBN FTTC services and VoIP capability to replace telco copper phone lines.

The new DAB+ service was launched in a testing phase and is due to be officially launched later this year. Digital program interchange equipment was also installed.

Technical support was provided for the Young Virtuoso of the Year Competition live broadcast, as well as a range of recording assignments. We also welcomed Liam O'Connell to our Audio Services production team.

Among priorities are the ongoing need to replace the main transmitter; replace Studio 1, 3, and 5 studio consoles; refurbish outside recording and broadcasting kits; integrate web-based metadata; develop a digital music library; and transition to digital playout in the studios.

The resulting benefits will directly accrue to the community in the form of more local programming and better opportunities for community participation in our new digital media ventures thus helping to secure ArtSound's future viability at a time of great uncertainty.

In 2020, I participated in webinars and virtual conferences hosted by Technorama Inc (TR20), the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, and the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO). I also volunteered my services as a grant evaluator for the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

I am most grateful to Rodger Bean and Peter Monaghan who have provided valuable assistance to me during 2020/21.

Chris Deacon OAM
Manager Technology