



Australian Society for
Performing Arts Healthcare

Quarterly news update from ASPAH

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Dear <<First Name>>

In this, our second quarterly newsletter, we are delighted to bring you news of our forthcoming Symposium in Sydney this November, and also to report to you on some of the events that we have been involved in during the past three months. The committee has been busy promoting the work of ASPAH far and wide, and it is with great pleasure that we announce that [the new website](#) is now live. More features will be added shortly, including our Professional Directory.

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ASPAH members talk to students at Qld Conservatorium Project Week

Three ASPAH members presented a talk to 55 tertiary music students on 7th May during the Queensland Conservatorium Project Week. Dr Dale Rickert, who was recently awarded his PhD in issues relating to musician injury, presented a talk entitled *Getting music and medicine to prescribe together: How collaboration in performing arts healthcare can lead to peak performance*.

His overview of the history of Performing Arts Medicine showed how awareness among arts practitioners and health professionals has developed, and included health statistics on injury rates, performance anxiety and psychological problems. Dale also gave a memorable account of his personal growth to awareness of injury, and outlined risk factors generally. He concluded with a call to arms for musicians to become active in advocating their own health needs by speaking out about health issues and seeing performance health as a means to peak performance.

David Peirce, Physiotherapist at *Pondera Physio and Pilates* presented practical tips for avoiding pain and injury. He discussed the value of a dynamic warm up, and presented his four favourite stretches for recovery after playing. He also detailed his four steps for recovery after pain and injury: release, rest, re-learn and recover.

Kaja Quinn from *Skeletal Harmonics* at West End discussed stories from her experience of providing physical and psychological support to major touring bands and artists. She explained the good and bad sides to life as a performer under the constant spotlight of high pressure performing.

The session concluded with a Q&A session from students to the three panel members. Thanks to the Queensland Conservatorium



2014 ASPAH Symposium Announced

We are delighted to announce that the 2014 National ASPAH Symposium will be held on Saturday 29th November 2014 at the University of Sydney, New South Wales. The theme of this year's event will be *The Complete Performer: Turning Evidence into Practice*.

We are honored to have two keynote presenters this year. Mr Victor Popov, an experienced Sports Physiotherapist, will share his views on holistic management of performing artists' health. With his regular contact with dancers and musicians, Mr Popov will provide important insights to improve our approach to helping performing artists. Mr Gerald Marko, a Certified Estill Voice Coach, will present on ways to improve vocal technique and health relevant for all performing artists. Both presenters will then conduct practical workshops to translate the theory.

ASPAH members and other specialised researchers, clinicians, educators and students will deliver presentations with a particular focus on translating evidence into practical strategies for implementation in our studios, practices and/or research labs. This year there will also be short 5-by-5 presentations by students and others designed to give attendees a taste of a wide range of

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Get to Know the Committee That Represents You

What is your name?

Cliffton Chan. I have a pretty difficult first name over the phone – with anything from Clinton, Clifford to Christian. A barista once shouted out 'Glifford'. To say the least, I was wondering where my coffee went after 15 minutes.



Tell us a little bit about your role at The University of Sydney?

I am a lecturer in the Sydney Medical School with a joint teaching and research position. I teach musculoskeletal anatomy into professional health undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, medical radiation and exercise physiology. My specific teaching interest is in functional anatomy, kinematics and the anatomical analysis of exercise.

My primary area of research is in physiotherapy-based interventions to prevent and manage performance-related musculoskeletal disorders in musicians. Under the supervision and mentorship of international renowned leader in the field, Dr Bronwen Ackermann, this has so far included exercise interventions, triage consultation services, and onsite recovery and treatment clinics. I am also very interested in a holistic approach to treating musician issues outside of the traditional physiotherapy model, such as nutrition requirements, playing load monitoring, performance psychology and mental well-being through collaboration with other health professionals.

Why is this so important?

Increasingly, performing artists are being compared with athletes in hopes of encouraging heightened awareness of the repetitive stresses placed on the body. There is now growing evidence to validate the high physical and psychological demands performing artists face. In light of this, performing artists should not be surprised if they sustain an injury but rather be able to access appropriate and specialised health education to best manage and prevent common injuries. Performing artists should not need to suffer for all that they offer, often for little financial gain, to the society.

How does the work of ASPAH impact on your role at The University of Sydney and the people you deal with?

ASPAH keeps me connected with a group of passionate healthcare professionals, performing artists and academics interested in advancing and promoting performing arts medicine in Australia. This provides me with the impetus to drive this research and work towards better awareness of performing artist's health and management to all parties.

In your downtime, what do you do?

I enjoy playing violin at an amateur level with a community orchestra and for a contemporary church band. Playing with others is so rewarding and important to me. I definitely notice how my general mood changes when I go without playing for a few months.

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In Memorium



It is with great sadness that we bring news of the death of Alice Brandfonbrener, Founding President of [PAMA](#) (Performing Arts Medicine Association) on Saturday, May 31st, after a long health

education and experience.

In keeping with past conferences, there will be plenty of opportunity for networking and catching up over meal breaks and of course an evening dinner. And the ASPAH Annual General Meeting will be held during the afternoon. This year's Symposium will be shorter than the accustomed 2-day conference format, however we're packing plenty in so it's sure to be a great day.

Go to our [new look website](#) to find out more about registration details. If you are interested in presenting at this year's Symposium, details can also be found on the [ASPAH website](#), and the closing date for submissions is 23rd June.

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Current Performing Arts Environment is Not Sustainable

I was recently involved in the Canberra International Music Festival as a Sprogis Woods Young Artist, playing baroque cello in the Wallfisch Band alongside top professionals in the field. This festival is an incredibly ambitious event, bringing together hundreds of musicians from all over the world ranging from professional freelancers and established ensembles to emerging artists and students. This year the program involved 26 events over nine days. Most of these concerts were prepared by the artists during the same nine day period, to be performed for audiences paying upwards of \$80 for each individual event.

It was a high-stress environment; limited time, limited people-power on the administrative end and many dramas. There was no room for mishaps, but they inevitably happened and the classic phrase "the show must go on!" stood strong in the face of these issues. From backstage emotional breakdowns to bicycle accidents, the first five days alone of the festival had been eventful. Throughout the festival there were musicians rehearsing with bandaged hands, ice packs held to arms, not to mention the mental and physical fatigue suffered largely in silence by players often having only 10 hours between arriving home after a concert and commencing rehearsal on a new program the next day. (I won't go into detail regarding other challenging issues such as the lack of adjustable chairs, poor lighting or the extremely cramped backstage area - these issues are common at many events like this.)

It was a remarkable festival with standing ovations for nearly every event, as well as the performing artists themselves inspired and overjoyed to be working with old and new colleagues from around the world. For me it was an incredibly unique



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Alice, along with Dick Lederman, had the vision over 30 years ago to see what was needed in terms of the practice of performing arts medicine and blazed the trail for all of us. She will be sadly missed.

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Dear Friends of ASPAH

Since our last newsletter we have we have been saddened by the resignation of Dr Margaret Osborne from the Presidency of ASPAH. It was a decision she made reluctantly but one which the Executive Committee accepted with a mixture of understanding, regret and profound gratitude for the enormous effort and inspirational leadership she gave during her time at the helm. We wish her the very best.

In the interim I've been privileged to be asked to step into the breach. My involvement with ASPAH has always been behind the scenes so this new role is both exciting and a little uncomfortable. None the less I hope that I can be of service. Fortunately I have the support of a truly remarkable group of people. This ASPAH Committee has an energy and enthusiasm which is inspirational and which shines through our fresh new website.

There are a number of exciting initiatives in the pipeline. In particular we are planning to launch a searchable directory of members, modelled on the PAMA web directory. This will bring better healthcare access to the Australian performing arts community, become a key reference for anyone with a question about performing arts healthcare, as well as providing the means for members - healthcare providers and performers alike - to communicate with each other.

So until the next newsletter, and with the anticipation of seeing as many of you as possible at the Symposium in November,

Best Regards,

Paul

Dr Paul Duff

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music alongside my idols, but also an opportunity to feel what it's like to work at a professional pace and meet professional demands.

Most striking to me, however, was my awareness throughout the festival of the strong emergence of something extremely important and heartening: conversations among musicians about the healthcare issues caused by their work. Musicians were not only chatting backstage and in lunch breaks about past and present physical injuries, but also about performance anxiety and more sensitive issues such as depression. Great quotes came up such as "freelance musicians don't get sick - we can't afford to"; "teachers don't teach students how to perform and how to overcome the anxiety - what chance do they have?" and "I used to play with injuries because I felt like I had to". Subjects like this used to be taboo; even a few years ago, after addressing a shoulder injury of my own before it got too serious, I felt like I was put in a box and made to feel like a weaker minority by my peers. In such a short time the conversations have started happening, and soon enough stronger demands will start being made by this community. Performing arts pedagogy practices and performing arts venues have a lot to answer for - I would encourage all ASPAH members to make a noise about these issues in your own community and demand a fighting chance for our country's performing artists to live and work in a sustainable way. We are ready to see these changes!

[Camilla Tafra](#), ASPAH committee member

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