MEDIA RELEASE

Long-term succession planning announced

Leadership changes ahead for Musica Viva

31 January 2018

Musica Viva Chairman Charles Graham today announced that Mary Jo Capps, after nearly 20 years as the company’s CEO, would be stepping down at the end of 2018.

He also advised that as part of the organisation’s long-term succession strategy, Carl Vine AO, Artistic Director since November 2000, will step down at the end of 2019. The final season to be programmed by Vine will be Musica Viva’s 75th anniversary program in 2020.

In making the announcement, Graham highlighted the dynamic growth of Musica Viva under the stewardship of this remarkable team. “Musica Viva has gone from strength to strength, thanks in no small part to the inspired leadership of Mary Jo and Carl. Indeed, they have played a pivotal role not only in our company’s ongoing success but also in shaping a strong and vibrant international arts sector. I would like to express my profound thanks, both personally and on behalf of all those who have had the great fortune to accompany them in achieving this vision.”

Musica Viva is stronger than ever thanks to the Capps and Vine legacy. By establishing the most active commissioning program of any Major Performing Arts organisation, they have placed new Australian music in the global spotlight through flagship programs such as the Hildegard Project dedicated to female composers and the Ken Tribe Fund for Australian Composers. They’ve also brought the world stage to Australia, touring hundreds of leading musicians in Musica Viva’s highly successful International Concert Season and Coffee Concert programs.

The Musica Viva In Schools program has seen significant growth during the tenure of Capps and Vine. Each year, almost 300,000 children all over the country benefit from its world-leading digital resources, professional development and outstanding Australian musicians, including the acclaimed Indigenous cultural groups. This quality music education is now available to every Australian child, regardless of their school’s location, size or socio-demographic setting, thanks to the creation of the Equal Music Program.

Capps and Vine have played a major role in developing the quality and reach of chamber music in Australia, financially supported by the establishment of the Amadeus Society donor groups in Sydney and Melbourne. The biennial Musica Viva Festival was created under their leadership, bringing together the finest chamber musicians with the best local emerging artists in the Australian Youth Orchestra chamber music program. They also took on the artistic and operational direction of the Huntington Estate Music Festival, broadening its reach and delighting sell-out crowds each year in Mudgee NSW.

With the future vibrancy of the artform always in their sights, Capps and Vine have built on Musica Viva’s leadership role in artist development by creating the FutureMakers program and assuming responsibility for the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in partnership with ANAM and the Melbourne Recital Centre.
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Most recently, Musica Viva moved to a new national office in Sydney that includes state-of-the-art rehearsal and recording facilities in the purpose-built Janette Hamilton Studio and Kim Williams Digital Production Suite. As befits the only truly national performing arts organisation, Musica Viva’s offices in each state have kept pace with this expansion, increasing scope in line with the new Musica Viva Constitution and the creation of the Members Council in 2016.

Amid all this dynamic growth, Capps and Vine have stabilised the financial position of the organisation, doubling revenues since 1999 and creating reserves equal to 90% of annual turnover.

“It has been an enormous privilege to steward the incredible organisation that Musica Viva has become over its nearly 75 years,” says Capps. “International artists constantly remind us that there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world, while the responses from students and teachers all over Australia give me great hope for the future of music. I am indebted to the many amazing colleagues, musicians and stakeholders who have made every day at Musica Viva a joy. My debt is particularly deep to Carl Vine, who has been the North Star as we have navigated the inevitably varied waters of bringing people together to explore and enjoy what I would argue is one of the pinnacles of human creativity: chamber music.”

Vine adds: “It’s hard to believe that almost 20 years have passed since I assumed the artistic reins at Musica Viva. My task was made immensely easier by a first-rate support team, most specifically Tim Matthies followed by Katherine Kemp, supported in turn by the finest concert logistics team on the planet. Nothing would have been possible without the constant support and unflinching honesty of Mary Jo, and without the continuing endorsement of successive chairmen of the company’s board. Musica Viva has now engulfed half of my adult life, and it has been an unbelievable honour to devote these years to exploring the supreme creative social phenomenon that is classical chamber music.”

“The Board and stakeholders of Musica Viva gratefully acknowledge the position of managerial stability and artistic vitality that are the hallmarks of this legacy,” concludes Graham. “Thanks to their foresight and dedication, we are in the fortunate position to begin a careful and considered search for the right leaders to guide this remarkable organisation into the future. Theirs are big shoes to fill and it will be no easy task!”

The search for a CEO successor will begin shortly with an announcement expected in the second half of 2018. The next Musica Viva Artistic Director will be identified with the involvement of the new CEO, the Board and a firm of domestically as well as internationally focussed HR consultants.

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