AN AUSSIE, NORWEGIAN AND ROMANIAN STRENGTHEN STRINGS UNIT

One of Australia’s most acclaimed international music teachers is among a trio of music masters appointed to the Strings department of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Alice Waten, who has taught at distinguished institutions around the globe and mentored dozens of successful Australian artists in a 35 year career, will join The Con after a world-wide recruitment program.

The appointment of Waten, Norwegian violinist Ole Bohn and Romanian violist Reiner Schmidt, represents the first major expansion in full-time appointments to the String Unit in 10 years.

The international search assessed 130 candidates.

“We are extremely pleased to announce a broadening of the strings area with three outstanding appointments, which the selection committee members are confident will greatly enhance this area of musical endeavour and excellence,” said the Dean of the Conservatorium, Professor Kim Walker.

“The recruitment program produced a short-list of 15 stellar teachers, all of whom were qualified in many ways, but in the end the committee was unanimous in its final selections.”

Alice Waten was the first Australian to study at the Moscow Conservatoire, graduating with a Master of Arts degree, where her principal teachers were Valery Klimov and David Oistrakh. Previously, she studied with Eberhard Feltz at the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin.

Teaching positions include Head of Strings, Chetham's Specialist Music School, Manchester, UK; Head of Strings and Orchestral Studies, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts; Artist Teacher in Residence, Senior Lecturer in Violin and Director of the Conservatorium Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Conservatorium of Music; Head of Strings and Classical Ensemble, Australian Institute of Music, Sydney; and guest lectureships including The Menuhin School (UK), Idyllwild School of the Arts (California USA), Canberra School of Music and the Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne.

Her former students include Richard Tognetti (violinist and Artistic Director, Australian Chamber Orchestra); Dimity Hall (violinist, Australia Ensemble and the Goldner String Quartet); Marina Marsden (Assistant Concertmaster, Sydney Symphony); Kirsten Williams (Associate Concertmaster, Sydney Symphony); and Sun Yi (Co-concertmaster, the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra).

Former students hold positions in leading orchestras throughout the world including the New York Philharmonic; World Symphony Orchestra, USA; Bavarian Radio Orchestra; Linz Symphony Orchestra, Austrail Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam; Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Covent Garden Opera Orchestra; London Philharmonia; Hong Philharmonic; and Hong Kong Sinfonietta.

Waten has been active in many teaching seminars worldwide as both participant and observer, including the Luxembourg Conservatory (with Daniel Shafran and Igor Ozim), the Shanghai Conservatory (with Yu Li Na) and the Wuhan Conservatory (with Liang Xin) in China, and in New York at the Juilliard School (with Dorothy De Lay, Ramy Shevelov and Sally Thomas). She has observed and contributed to the organisation of curricula and pedagogical methodologies at the Guildhall School (UK), the Academie International Tours (France), the Moscow Conservatoire and the Central Music School, Moscow (Russia).
Many of Waten's students have won competitions and awards in Australia and overseas, including: First Prizes in the Goldner Music Scholarship, Sydney; National Youth Concerto Competition, Brisbane; Kendall Violin Competition, NSW; and Townsville Concerto Competition, Queensland; First Prize in the New Zealand National Concerto Competition; Second Prize in the Gisborne Music Competition, New Zealand; First Prize in the Gisbourne Music Competition, New Zealand; Kendall Violin Competition; Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year; Second Prize in the International Mozart Competition, Salzburg, Austria; Dorothy Fraser Scholarship; The Dorcas McLean Award; Finalist in the Symphony Australia Young Performer Award; two Finalists, Symphony Australia Young Performer Award, string section; the Fellowship to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra; two Finalists, Symphony Australia Young Performer Award, string section.

Significant student performances include: Concertos with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (2004); Concertos with Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the 30th anniversary of Sydney Opera House (2003); Melbourne Symphony; The Queensland Orchestra; West Australian Symphony Orchestra; and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Alice Waten coached the acclaimed Tankstream Quartet from its formation in 2000. The Quartet is presently enjoying a successful chamber music career with engagements throughout Australia and overseas.

Prior to devoting her professional life to teaching, Alice Waten was a foundation member of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and held a principal chair for 11 years.

“This is a fantastic development in the strings faculty – the diverse talent and experience will add depth and vitality,” said Alice Waten.

Ole Böhn has pursued an extensive career as soloist, chamber musician, and teacher. Since his debut in 1969, he has performed regularly with orchestras in Europe, the US and South America. In 1983 he toured the People's Republic of China.

He has collaborated with conductors such as Moshe Atzmon, Herbert Blomstedt, James Conlon, Lukas Foss, Michael Giehlen, Marek Janowski, Franz Welser-Möst, and Oliver Knussen, and is a frequent performer on radio and television world-wide.

In 1990 he gave the world premiere of Elliott Carter's violin concerto with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and has since performed this concerto, which was written for and dedicated to him, with the leading orchestras in Europe and the US

Ole Böhn's repertoire ranges from the baroque up until the present day and he is regarded as one of the leading interpreters of American contemporary music in Scandinavia.

He has taught at the Royal Danish Conservatory and at the Conservatory of Music in Oslo; given classes at the Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, Hart School of Music, the Norwegian State Academy of Music, Gedai Institute, Tokyo, and the University of Northern Illinois; and for several years conducted summer classes at the Officina da Musica de Curitiba, Brazil.

Ole Böhn has studied under Louise Behrend at the Juilliard School of Music, with Ernst Glaser in Oslo, Henry Holst at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music, and with Max Rostal at the Statliche Hochschule für Musik in Cologne.

He is the concertmaster of the Norwegian National Opera and has previously held a similar position with the Copenhagen Symphony Orchestra, and worked for shorter periods as concertmaster of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Teatro del Fenice in Venice, Theatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro, the Residentie Orchestra in Den Haag, Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, The Beethoven Orchestra, Bonn and the Hamburg State Opera.

Ole Böhn uses a violin made in 1766 by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini. It was acquired for his use by Nordea Bank of Norway.
Reiner Schmidt studied in the Musikhochschule Cluj, Romania and in Detmold under Bruno Giuranna before final studies in Rome. For many years he was solo violist in the Frankfurt Opera and Museum Orchestra and taught in the Musichochschule of Heidelberg-Mannheim.

He is currently Professor of Music at the Hochschule for Music in Wurzburg. A dedicated chamber musician, he has made many recordings of orchestral and chamber music in the company of prestigious orchestras and musicians.

Reiner Schmidt was previously a guest professor at the National Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome and gives regular masterclasses in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, and Greece. He has been a leading guest performer at many international Festivals, and a jury member of prominent international competitions. He is also a main editor and researcher for viola music with the Peters Verlag catalogue.

His long history of successful concert appearances includes conducting in Europe, America and Asia.

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