

The unfinished symphony

SADJ March 2015, Vol 70 no 2 p48

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The most romantic of all Schubert's symphonies, the Eighth, is most familiar to us as "*The Unfinished*". Yet there is a mystery as to why it was never completed. After all, Schubert did produce a Ninth Symphony, some six years later. Why did the Eighth linger unattended? No real answer to that....but as far as it goes, the Eighth is a mastery of harmony, of melody and of the intricate blending of individual instruments. It also demonstrates enormous power over a great range. The promise is vast, the expectations, justifiably huge.

We too have an unfinished symphony in the Association for even with all the considerable advances and developments achieved over past years, we still require continuous commitments and efforts to meet the ever changing challenges facing dentistry today. The 2013/2014 Annual Integrated Report encompasses a multitude of activities and details the resolution of numerous dilemmas. Even in the face of the difficult financial status of the country, the Association has managed to emerge from that difficult year with a small operational excess. Considerable funds had to be expended in the pursuit of the best advantages for members in diverse actions which could impact on practice and principles. Matching that expenditure was a huge effort by those who direct the affairs of the Association. The Integrated Report reflects not only the achievements but also the forward plans, which are comprehensive and positive.

In recognising just how involved has been the Association, it was a matter of some surprise to learn that the most recent meeting of Council was completed quite comfortably in one



day. Those who served on previous Councils will recall the protracted meetings, the long discussions, the intricate deliberations and cogitations! We may be reminded of another classic... The Bekkersdal Marathon, written by Herman Charles Bosman. What a story... evoking vivid images of a deeply religious community who were faced with a dominee who fell asleep at the pulpit having directed the congregation to sing Psalm 119 which has 176 verses! A marvellous reflection of a group who knew they had to meet the responsibilities of completing the Psalmand no one dreamt of waking the dominee! Those were the days when virtually every meeting of Council was its own Bekkerdsdal Marathon! (not that the Chairman ever went to sleep!!). Today the Association and the Council have the benefit of streamlined Committee

workings, of concise reporting and of effective summaries of committee decisions. No marathon sessions even though we are in a state of development, a state of continuous endeavour. Our own Unfinished Symphony has its own Conductor, Lead violinist, Chief percussionist.. the identities may change but the music is sustained although perhaps the Wind instruments need not be as vocal as before!

The Association will continue to develop and to advance... we need the power and the range offered by an active and involved membership. Let's start by reading and absorbing the Integrated Annual Report.