

The Opening Speech

At the Launch, Rozelle Campus

1st November, 2008

The Founding Director, Kyunghee Lee

Thank you our students from AICM & AIPAH, what a great performance, indeed.

Honorable John Aquilina, Mr. Clark, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening. I sat and listened to the wonderful words from our speakers tonight and I now regret that I didn't go first, because they have said it all **so well** and there isn't much left for me to add.

So I may then quickly sum up how AICM began and our vision for the future.

In 1992 – I was a jury member at an international piano competition in Italy. **It was there, I had a dream** - and that dream was to establish a unique and boutique style conservatorium, that placed the emphasis on performance, and operated with the *student* as the focal point. The thought

was that there was enough room in Sydney for such a school. Rex Hobcroft, formerly the director of the Sydney Con , who was also there, as the jury member at the same time. Rex immediately shared the vision, and since then he has been a keen supporter of AICM.

I had for many years been a concert pianist, conductor, examiner and teacher, and believed that I had a larger role to play in the development of the creative industry in Sydney and beyond.

We secured premises at Enfield in 1992 - I recall going to an auction, one wet Saturday morning and without fully realizing, I had purchased the property – so there was no reason not to pursue the dream after all - and in 1993 the dream became reality. We opened our doors with just 7 students. AICM was born.

In 1997 we secured our premises at Harris Park. A most exciting time, I recall. We purchased the property from the Sisters of Mercy. I vividly recall asking Darrell Hines to pull down an old, green venetian blind that covered the stairway window. We saw a stained glass masterpiece with images of Haydn and Beethoven – we had truly found our new home – or perhaps it had found us.

We developed a range of initiatives between 1998 and 2007 of which we are very proud. The progress took not only a great

deal of courage but also **ongoing** determination, and a sense of 'staying with the plan' that at times took every ounce of my being to sustain – but sustain we did.

Without the support of some important staff members there from the beginning, such as Dr. Hines and Dr. Smith, we wouldn't be here today. Ably supported by such wonderful people, we pushed forward and achieved many of the goals we set out with. We shared the notion of doing something special together – with music as the basis. This remains our focus today.

2008 marks an all important year for us at AICM. Dr Greg Whateley joined me as Principal in March, and we have together forged an invigorated strategic plan, that will take us into 2012 and beyond. The plan involves student growth, course development, strategic alliances and multiple partnerships which we believe will set AICM apart from the rest.

We have been fortunate to gather around us a quality team of staff, fellows and supporters who will help us move forward and become what we need to be.

For me - I am standing once again on the edge of something special. Always knowing that it is possible to *fall* – but always knowing that with the right people with me, falling is in fact '*not an option*'. Again a new start – a sense of 'again' but

nevertheless filled with enormous anticipation and excitement for a new chapter for the new AICM.

This new plan, of course, required a relocation – this time to **Rozelle** – where we are standing tonight. For the third time (and probably not the last), we have established ourselves at a bigger, brighter, more vibrant location, but with the same basic principal in mind, to create a unique environment where students remain the focal point.

In this short commentary I have used physical locations (Enfield, Harris Park and Rozelle) as markers – but in reality AICM is much more than a set of buildings – it is really about the people who have taught and supported, who have studied with us, worked with us, or in some cases have done all!

I welcome you to our new home, our new headquarters for AICM. In 2008 we have students from 3 Australian States and Territories and 7 countries. In 2009 we move from a small conservatorium status to medium size status. We are entering a new era highlighted by this event tonight.

For those of you who have supported me thus far in the journey you have my very sincere gratitude – for those of you who are joining me in the next stage, you have my unqualified support.

So be with us, dream with us, and we know, it will all come true an answer to our Prayer.

Our next and final song AICM students will present is 'The Prayer'.

Thank you.