

# Abbotsford Convent to be ANAM's new home for the next 3 years



*image by Anne Moffat*

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) today announced that Melbourne's historic Abbotsford Convent will be its new interim home for up to the next 3 years. ANAM is the country's leading music performance training organisation and has been based at the South Melbourne Town Hall since 1996.

ANAM's General Manager Nick Bailey said, "We are pleased to be joining the creative community of the Abbotsford Convent. The beautiful precinct – more of a 'campus' than a 'venue', although home to some extraordinary public performance spaces – provides an ideal environment for ANAM. When we are able to return to in-person training and performances, the Convent will provide a nurturing environment for the musicians and staff, and some wonderful spaces in which to share our music-making."

Abbotsford Convent's CEO Collette Brennan said, "We are thrilled to be welcoming ANAM to our creative community. As a vital part of the Victorian arts ecology, empowering artists' creative practices is one of the Convent's core purposes. Moreover, our passionate commitment to delivering engaging live musical events is enduring and we look forward to showcasing ANAM musicians' skill and imagination and enhancing our existing live musical offering for the community."

The move has been prompted by urgent engineering work which is required to take place at South Melbourne Town Hall over the next 9 - 36 months. The investigations and possible remediation of structural issues are the next steps towards realising ANAM's proposal for an ambitious renovation project of the South Melbourne Town Hall – a project that will see the renewal and upgrade of the Town Hall facilities and ensure both a secure and state-of-the-art home for ANAM for the next 50 years and an iconic and industry standard cultural and community destination venue for all Victorians.

Of the required \$43million budget, the Commonwealth Dept of Infrastructure has committed \$12.5m and a further \$2.5m of private funds is confirmed. ANAM is seeking an investment of \$10m from the Victorian government, which will in turn unlock further Council and philanthropic funds.

Once funding is secured and remediation work is completed – and subject to the positive outcome of further local community consultation – then the major refurbishment project for ANAM's long-term home at South Melbourne Town Hall will be ready to commence.

"However, without further funding the project will be unable to proceed and ANAM will need to seek new premises more aligned with its status as one of the world's leading performance training academies," said Bailey, "In the meantime we are delighted to call Abbotsford Convent our home."

The Convent will be the base for administration, faculty studios, chamber music, ensemble and orchestra rehearsals, classes, and many of ANAM's performances. ANAM is also leasing a commercial property – the Studios – which will be converted into practice studios and teaching spaces for its 65 musicians.

#### **ABOUT ANAM**

ANAM is regarded as one of the world's leading performance training academies. It takes in the most brilliant musicians from Australia and New Zealand and sends them out into the world as artists with the skill, courage and imagination to be the next music leaders. ANAM is a central part of Australia's cultural life. ANAM musicians find themselves sitting cross-legged on the floor with a class of local third graders one day, to performing alongside the world's finest artists on stages all across the country the next. Its musicians regularly perform with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne, West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras and present over 180 performances each year. ANAM alumni work in orchestras and chamber ensembles around the world, performing as soloists, contributing to educating the next generation of musicians, and winning major national and international awards. ANAM's partners increasingly include the world's great academies and music organisations. By 2028, ANAM's 30th birthday year, ANAM will carry equal international weight to that of the much older Juilliard School (New York) and Royal College of Music (London).

#### **ABOUT THE ABBOTSFORD CONVENT**

Just four kilometres from Melbourne's CBD and spread over 16 acres, the Abbotsford Convent—with its 11 historic buildings and gardens—is Australia's largest multi-arts precinct. The site is home to over 120 studios, galleries, cafes, a school, 3MBS radio station, and an abundance of green open space. Every year the Convent curates and also welcomes a diverse range of art projects, rehearsals, workshops, exhibitions, markets, events and festivals.

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