

JAMES MCCARTHY (1939-2021)

James McCarthy, who served as IASA President from 1993-1996 and as Past President from 1996-1999, passed away in January 2021 after a long illness. James was Sydney Manager at the National Film & Sound Archive of Australia from 1986-1996, and was a long-time board member of the Australian Recorded Sound Association. In addition to his work in audiovisual archives, he was extraordinarily active in composition, conducting, and music criticism. He was Director of Music at Film Australia from 1964-1986, programmed and presented for classical music station Fine Music Sydney (formerly known as 2MBS FM), and was a contributor to Fine Music Magazine, Limelight, Soundscapes, the International Record Guide and Opera-Opera.

Born in Tamworth, New South Wales in 1939, James spent his early childhood in Sydney and Gosford. During the later 1950s and the 1960s James moved in theatrical circles connected to Sydney University, appearing as a piano player in Bruce Beresford's early film *The Devil to Pay* in 1962. James was, by then, already working as a production assistant at Film Australia in 1959, becoming its Music Officer in 1964. In his time at Film Australia James commissioned, 'produced' and occasionally composed film scores (more than 200 of them!). In his own time, James was frequently the musical director of stage musicals, operettas and operas.

In 1986 James joined the National Film and Sound Archive, becoming the first manager of the NFSA's Sydney Office. James's skills and knowledge extended across Australian moving image and audio culture, but it was, perhaps, his leadership of national and international groups of musical and audio libraries and archives that he made his most enduring contribution. He was a member of the Australian branch of IASA when the membership voted to form a new national organization, ASRA (The Australian Sound Recordings Association). James was an ASRA Board member from 2000-2002, and then went on to serve six terms as ASRA Vice President from 2002-2014.

Diagnosed with stage four melanoma 10 years before his death, James passed away peacefully on 13th January 2021 in Sydney. Gatherings of his numerous friends and colleagues in Sydney and Canberra were accompanied by messages of affection and regret from around the world.

Jeff Brownrigg

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The IASA Journal thanks Dr. Brownrigg for his permission to republish an edited version of a tribute which he delivered at both James McCarthy's funeral and at a celebration of his life at NFSA earlier in 2021.