

BIOGRAPHY - ASHLEY ARBUCKLE

First Violin



Ashley was born and educated in Perth, graduating in 1964 with a Bachelor of Music from the University of Western Australia. He became a member of the W.A. Symphony Orchestra soon after and in 1972 was appointed Associate Concertmaster.

March 1974 saw Ashley commence studies in Switzerland and London culminating in him being offered the position of co-leader of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, remaining with them for three years. During this time he was a founding member of the Australian Sinfonia of London, also giving solo performances with the R.P.O. and the London Soloists.

He returned to Perth in 1978 and resumed his position as co-leader of the W.A.S.O. In 1981 Ashley was appointed to the position of co-leader of the London Symphony Orchestra, touring Europe and the U.S.A., leading the orchestra and as featured soloist. He remained in this position for ten years during which time he was invited to be guest leader of the B.B.C. Welsh Symphony, formed the acclaimed St. Giles Quartet and performed with Yehudi Menuhin in the Menuhin Festival Orchestra.

Returning to Perth, Ashley took up the mantle of W.A.S.O. Concertmaster in late 1990. As well as enjoying the responsibilities of this position, he founded the W.A. Philharmonic, recording music for Hollywood movies.

He was the only Australian musician invited to join Sir Georg Solti's World Orchestra for Peace – convened in Geneva to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. He founded the Royal Perth Yacht Club “ Concert on the Bay “ series.

These concerts were staged every year from 1996 – 2005. In 1997 he led the W.A. Symphony on their Australian Tour to the Eastern States.

Due to a rare neurological condition affecting his bowing arm, Ashley had no choice but to cease playing in 1998, retiring from his position as W.A.S.O. Concertmaster in 1999. Some years of specialist medical attention followed and an operation was performed in 2002 by renowned brain surgeon Dr. Charles Teo, which saw his bowing arm return to normal. Soon after, he was able to play again - the music world was thrilled to see him return to the international stage.

Recent musical highlights include leading the W.A. Philharmonic in ballet seasons of Swan Lake, Nutcracker and Peter Pan - Attending the Grappelli Jazz Camp in Holland - Performing at the Stockholm Music Festival and at the Ellington Jazz Club in Perth.

During his classical career, Ashley worked closely with Andre Previn, Claudio Abbado, Leonard Bernstein, Sir Georg Solti, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Frank Zappa and Andrew Lloyd-Webber to name but a few.

He cites a highlight of his career as meeting Lady Di in 1995 after leading the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican.

In January 2015, Ashley was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in the National Australia Day Honours List for services to Music and the Arts.