

The Magic of Music

Western Qld Term 4 2020 - the magic of music was happening. Will and Harry Cameron, aged 11 and 9, from Ilfracombe, delighted the bush community with their violin and cello playing. The instrumental music students, enrolled at Longreach School of Distance Education (LSODE), had a series of musical performances to showcase their love of stringed instruments and music appreciation.

October 2020 saw Will and his mum, Louise, travel 800km to Rockhampton for the State Honours Ensemble Program (SHEP). Run by the Conservatorium of Music Griffith University, this weekend course allows nominated instrumental music students from around Central and Western Qld to play in a large ensemble and be tutored by Qld's finest music educators. Will relished the opportunity to play in a large string ensemble as that is something not readily available in Western Qld. "I have to really listen to the other musicians and keep to the conductor's beat, not race ahead of the ensemble," Will discovered early on in the ensemble program. Participating in SHEP showcases a music level which is equivalent to state trials in school sport. Will's SHEP tutor was the highly regarded Mr Mark Sullivan, from Brisbane, who has taught Will violin on Skype since 2018. A lively and enthusiastic string ensemble concert on the Sunday gave the parents an insight into what an incredibly intense but fun weekend program it was for those lucky bush musicians.

Harry, aged 9, wasn't far behind Will this year, playing some great pieces on his cello. Harry also learns through the LSODE Instrumental music program with strings teacher, Ms Yvonne Moore. Yvonne brings with her 25 years of online music teaching experience. A weekly group lesson, for just 30 mins between them, has Harry plucking, bowing and shifting up and down that finger board ever so beautifully.

November saw a visit to the west by Brisbane based music group, 'Topology'. Topology bring to rural communities music workshops including composition, live arts bootcamps and community concerts. Topology visited the Cameron's property, Glenferrie, for a composition workshop and some fun ensemble playing. The boys',



Will and his music teacher, Mark Sullivan, from Brisbane.

guided by Topology's founding member, Dr Rob Davidson, composed their very own 'Glenferrie Rhapsody', performed the following night at a community concert in Longreach. Writing music, practising their part and ensemble rehearsal took place with great gusto and the concert, too, was nothing short of amazing.

School awards evening was held in early December. Will performed a thrilling violin solo with piano accompaniment. The LSODE instrumental ensembles performed – Harry holding up the rich bass harmonies on his cello. A Western Qld string ensemble playing at its best! And how the crowd loved it.

Christmas festivities are upon us and the boys are preparing for some busking. Best way for the young lads to earn some pocket money! Plus the locals get to sit back, relax and listen to some pretty clever music pieces.

The Covid19 pandemic may have put a stop to some community and sporting events throughout the year but it proved great music practice time at home. With the property almost destocked due to Western Qld's ongoing drought, music practice was a pretty good alternative to fencing, doing trough repairs or cleaning the workshop. 'There is no better way to prepare an evening meal – with the sound of beautiful music practice happening in the house. They then gear up the next day with morning music practice – enjoying it and getting 'that side' of the brain focussed for their on air school lessons."

2021 will see the boys continue their 'on air' music program; Will studying Violin AMEB grade 5 via Skype, both boys continuing with their 'on air' piano lessons with their Melbourne based teacher and Harry continuing with cello through the Instrumental Music program at LSODE. Not bad for bush kids who have only ever learnt music 'on air'. 'They don't know any different and they love it.' Let the magic of music in Western Qld continue.

Louise Cameron
Yaraka-Isisford ICPA Branch