



ACCOMPANISTS' GUILD
OF QUEENSLAND INC.

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23 February 2015

Mr Bernard Depasquale
General Manager Federal Office AMEB
5th Floor, 175 Flinders Lane
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Dear Sir,

The Accompanists Guild of Queensland has recently become aware of a surprising and misjudged policy adopted by the AMEB, of introducing recorded accompaniments for use in practical music exams "as an alternative to accompanists". As an association of professional accompanists, we are very concerned by this worrying initiative, and wish to strongly voice our disapproval of this decision.

While we recognise that recorded accompaniments may benefit students in the preparation and practice of pieces in some cases, the use of recorded "backing" in the actual examination can only provide a disservice to the young musicians. For one thing, we do not believe that "the availability of accompanists has become an issue", at least in the major centres. All our members are competent and experienced musicians, and always help the soloists to perform at their best.

The AMEB should, on the contrary, encourage the use of accompanists in the examination room by not making it simply optional. How can a nervous young student doing an exam for the first time for instance, feel that he/she is safe and secure when following a tape which will play "at the 100% tempo" without regard for tonal balance, and unresponsive to the candidate's stage of technical development? In more advanced cases, works which require good musical rapport between solo part and accompaniment can only be compromised and devoid of character and creative interpretation.

There are many other aspects of performance that can be affected without a real, live person, sensitive to nuances of interpretation, and supporting the solo candidate with commitment and sincerity.

We sincerely hope that the AMEB will reconsider their ill-advised decision and disregard this policy to demonstrate a more intelligent and understanding attitude towards ensemble playing, and to maintain some fundamental principles of good music-making in performance presentations.

Yours sincerely,

plv Regis Danillon
President
Accompanists' Guild of Queensland, Inc.