Case Study
Prodigy Project

What: The Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Empire Theatres have partnered to present the Prodigy Project over 2017 and 2018 giving young musicians the opportunity to learn and play with the QSO on stage at the Empire Theatre.

Students are selected via audition to participate. Each student that auditions is provided with a lesson with a QSO musician, so they can take away some skills regardless of if they are accepted into the project.

Successful auditionees are given the music to the piece to be performed at the concert and together with their teachers are afforded expert mentorship in the lead up to the performance including a rehearsal with conductor Guy Noble and the full orchestra.

In 2018, students also received a masterclass lesson run in conjunction with QSO teacher development program in Toowoomba. The students were invited to perform in the masterclass to further develop their performance skills.

In 2017, 5 students from 2 different schools were selected and performed Night on Bald Mountain by Mussorgsky as part of the Sweet Night Music concert presented at the Empire Theatre on 22 June 2017.

In 2018, 8 students from 8 different schools were selected and performed the Dvorak Carnival Overture as part of the Flowers and Film concert presented at the Empire Theatre on 28 September 2018.

The program has been supported by the Empire Theatres Foundation in 2017 and the St Baker Energy Innovation Fund in 2018.

When: May-June 2017
Performance 22 June 2017
March - September 2018
Performance 28 September 2018

Where: Empire Theatres

Partners, Contributors and Sponsors:

Prodigy Project masterclass was supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

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Outcomes:
Over the past two years, 13 students with promising skill have been involved with this program and have impressed musicians and audiences alike with their talent and professionalism.

Students have come from both public and private schools from as far a field as Dalby and Kingaroy.

Each student has benefitted from 5 hours of teaching from a professional musician and has spent time with an orchestra in a real performance setting.

“I thought that the music was challenging enough but not impossible, which allowed me to enhance both my technical and orchestral playing skills. My mentor, Hyung, was very supportive and had a very positive attitude with much advice to give. I was privileged to have played alongside him in the concert. I found that his advice on the shaping of the music helped me to have a more energetic approach to the piece, and the rehearsal was also helpful in getting a feel for the overall tempo and style. Overall, it was an enjoyable experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity I had to play with the QSO.”

Hannah Smith (Prodigy cello) 2018

Learnings and reflections:
Beyond the expert lessons and mentoring, the Prodigy Project gives in depth insight to students looking to pursue a career in music performance. It gives them a first hand look at what it takes to be a member of an orchestra.

The value of this program is in that experience and the observations they make of the professionals around them. The true learning is in the challenge of the music the realisation that the challenge must be met to succeed.

This project directly correlates with five objectives in the Empire Theatres Projects Company Business Plan.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy One</th>
<th>Be accessible and engaging.</th>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>To address the issues of remoteness and accessibility to the arts in regional Australia through the provision of arts services locally including training and education resources delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy Two</th>
<th>Link arts and community</th>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>To foster and maintain relationships with a broad range of cultural, community and government groups and individuals in order to be in tune with current priorities and desires.</td>
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<th>Strategy Three</th>
<th>Increase and deepen cultural consciousness and capacity in the region.</th>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Develop audiences and increase engagement in creative activity throughout our community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>To develop and nurture a community of artists and arts workers in and around the Toowoomba region.</td>
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<th>Strategy Four</th>
<th>Be a stable and reliable resource for the community.</th>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>To develop thriving arts business practice through strong partnerships, commercial income streams and alternative funding programs.</td>
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This project also links with Community outcomes 2.1 and 2.4 in the TRC 2014-2019 Corporate Plan.