

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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UTAS tribute for Jan Sedivka, musician and pedagogue

The University of Tasmania Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor David Rich today acknowledged the talent, influence and teaching prowess of Professor Jan Sedivka.

Prof Rich said Prof Sedivka, who died at the age of 91 in Hobart on the weekend, still held the position of Master Musician in Residence at the UTAS Conservatorium of Music, which he was given on his retirement in 1983.

Through his life Prof Sedivka achieved to the highest levels. He was an acclaimed concert violinist, former Director of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and one of Australia's most influential music teachers.

Prof Sedivka was born in Czechoslovakia in 1917 and obtained a Master Diploma with Honours from the Prague Conservatoire, before heading to Paris and then London following the outbreak of World War II.

He came to Australia in the early 1960s and moved to Tasmania later that decade with his wife, Beryl, and the third of their London International Trio, Sela Trau, where they became the Tasmanian Conservatorium Trio.

“This University and our music graduates over a long period of time have benefited greatly from having the expertise of such a master of strings and performance as well as an incredible pedagogue,” Prof Rich said.

“In 1971 when Jan took over as Head of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, he brought a level of expertise never known here before in terms of its European richness.

“And his legacy continues, as most of Australia’s orchestras would have players who had been taught by Jan Sedivka, let alone other orchestras around the world.

Prof Rich said Prof Sedivka was able to give the Conservatorium an international focus, encouraging an exchange of students through initiatives such as the String Summer School, which attracted students from overseas as well as locally and nationally.

“Jan made many contributions to music, not only as a teacher but also as a performer and in his academic roles,” he said.

In 1988, Prof Sedivka was presented an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from UTAS. For his services to music he received numerous other awards including Member of the Order of Australia, Honorary Professor, Shanghai Conservatory, and the Gratias Agit from the Czech Republic.

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