



Kerry Waddell

My Memories of Royal South Street Society Competitions

I have been attending the Royal South Street Society Calisthenic competitions every year in October since 1968, when Helen Simmons first asked me as a Junior to participate in the Intermediate second teams for March and Aesthetic. October visits to the RSSS competitions and participating on that beautiful, raked stage continued as an Intermediate and Championship Senior until 1986. I loved performing as part of a team and especially as a soloist, achieving 2nd place in the Most Graceful Girl competition in 1981.

I always remember the journeys to Ballarat, initially on the train with the rest of the team, then driving with my Aunty Myrtle, until I could drive myself, with Mum sitting on the back seat of the car sewing last minute sequins and beads on the Graceful dress. The journeys home were always an analysis of the competition results, and who liked which item best.

From 1972 to 1991, I also attended the RSSS competitions as a Coach, taking Subbies, Juniors and Intermediates to Ballarat for team competitions. I found standing side-stage as a Coach far more nerve-racking than performing. Trinity teams generally performed well at Ballarat, winning aggregates and advancing grades. I instilled in my performers the ethos and importance of the last competition of the year at RSS and they generally rose to the occasion.

Then I started writing for Helen Simmons when she adjudicated at the RSSS competitions, so I got to experience "the best seat in the house" at Her Majesty's Theatre and the prestige of the green room and suppers. Helen always mentioned that it was important to dress well and be on your best behaviour, particularly if you wanted to adjudicate at RSS one day!

Finally the day arrived in 1996 when I was invited to adjudicate the first week of Subbies and Juniors at the RSSS competition. I remember the excitement and pride of receiving that appointment and after 33 years of adjudicating, every appointment undertaken at RSS is something that I will always cherish.

Having adjudicated at the RSSS competitions on numerous occasions, I have always enjoyed being able to watch the work progress from Division 7 to Championship, witnessing the choreography of our many talented Calisthenic coaches and performers; and sharing the elation with my adjudicating peers on a panel. Especially the Graceful Girl and Senior Championship weekend where Calisthenics in Victoria is showcased with Interstate teams at its highest level.

Over the years, I have appreciated the support of the RSSS Calisthenic Committee, HMT Office staff and the many volunteers who welcome and acknowledge you during your time at the competition. I have

met some delightful people who I continue to respect as my friends – Ron & Dawn Harrington, Daphne (& Doug) McMillan, Tony & Barbara Cole, Lorraine & Lloyd Harvey, Peter Zala and Julie Wiseman. People who have devoted many hours to make Calisthenics at RSS a wonderful experience and an immense success.

Hopefully, this year, without the Covid-19 restrictions in rural Victoria and the likelihood of team numbers being reduced on stage, the atmosphere of the Calisthenic audience and excitement of Calisthenic performers will return to Her Majesty’s Theatre. As a regular visitor to Ballarat in October, I sincerely hope that things will return to normal and Calisthenic history will continue to be made, promoted and enjoyed by all who attend the Royal South Street Society Competitions.



Kerryn Waddell

Margaret Bourne

Julie Fox