

ANTHONY STEEL was educated at Oxford and Cambridge Universities and started his career in the arts in the early 1960s as general manager of the London Mozart Players. He became assistant general secretary of the London Symphony Orchestra and then the first planning manager of the South Bank Concert Halls before moving to Adelaide in 1972 as the first general manager of the Adelaide Festival Centre and artistic director of the Adelaide Festivals of 1974, '76 and '78. He returned to Adelaide to direct two more Festivals in 1984 and '86, after a spell as general manager of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and another as director of the Singapore Festival.

In the 1990s Steel was the founding director of two other Australian festivals – the National Festival of Australian Theatre in Canberra (1990 and 1992) and the Brisbane Biennial International Music Festival (1991 and 1993). He was producer of World Expo on Stage (the performing arts program of World Expo 88 in Brisbane) and director of the Sydney Festivals of 1995, '96 and '97.

He has served as a member of the Australia Council and as the inaugural chair of that body's Performing Arts Board. In 1978 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the arts.

In late 1997 he returned to Adelaide to live. During this last decade Anthony Steel has been engaged in projects for, amongst others, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, the South Australian and Tasmanian governments and the Sydney Opera House Trust. In 1999 he undertook a six-month engagement as executive producer for the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre and in 2000 acted as executive chair of the Barossa Music Festival. He recently completed a term as chair of the Advisory Board of the Arts Management Program of the University of South Australia, and is a member of the Board of Leigh Warren & Dancers. From 1999 to 2002 he served as a Board member of the Adelaide Festival.

In 2001 he was head of school at the Flinders Street School of Music, negotiating the School's merger with the Elder Conservatorium at Adelaide University, which took effect on January 1 2002. For the rest of that year he acted as a consultant to the resultant Elder School of Music for its capital works program.

In 2005 he was awarded a fellowship from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council to write a memoir. In 2006 he was music director of the Coriole Music Festival and has recently been engaged in projects on behalf of The Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals and Leigh Warren & Dancers. He is president of Recitals Australia, a member of the boards of Leigh Warren & Dancers and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and a visiting research fellow at the University of Adelaide. In 2007 he received the premier's lifetime achievement award at the Ruby Awards, South Australia's annual arts and cultural awards. He wrote a series of articles about the 2008 Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts for the Independent Weekly and chaired all ten of the Festival's lunchtime forums with visiting artists.