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Dear Mr. Snedden,

I've been asked to contact you urgently in order to express my opinion of the Fitter's Workshop in Canberra as a concert venue. My experience of the hall is limited to several concerts and rehearsals I attended as Composer-in-Residence at the 2010 Canberra International Music Festival. This, however, was sufficient for me to gain a highly favourable impression. The music I heard, much of it my own, ranged from intimate instrumental chamber music to a very large choral work with brass, organ and percussion.

Contrary to what might be expected from reading the report, I found that the warm acoustic, while naturally suited to choral music, also provided – if unaccountably - the necessary clarity and immediacy for intimate chamber music. The complex counterpoint and fine detail of my string quartets were clearly audible as was the texture of some piano music, which would be expected to smudge in a reverberant acoustic. And in one very lively and intricate virtuoso piece for six voices, the parts were well enough defined and sharp edged to make its effect.

I can't explain why this should be so, but the fact remains that the hall has the capacity to present many kinds of music with warmth and clarity, and to generate appreciative audience involvement. Visually, too, it is audience friendly, with a welcoming and uplifting atmosphere. The response to the concerts I attended was most enthusiastic and there was a palpable sense of delight and communality – of feeling at one with the music making and the space that accommodated it so graciously. I've never encountered an atmosphere quite like this before in a concert hall. Certainly the Fitter's Workshop is a great asset to the CIMF and should, in my opinion, be retained and promoted as the central focus of its activities.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Edwards AM.