



The Choir Sings in Salzburg & Vienna – July 2 – 11, 2014



A very pleasant lunch was appreciated by all at Golling Fortress before the choir's concert

The Melbourne Welsh Male Choir has a tradition of travelling overseas to participate in a Music Festival every few years. This year the festival was the Cantus Salisburgensis and the location was Salzburg, Austria, a city known worldwide for its music.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of Austria's greatest sons, was born here in 1756, and many great masters of the classical era lived and worked here as well. Today, Salzburg's orchestras and choirs carry on these great musical traditions on the stages and in the concert halls of the city.

Our choir was invited to join in the celebration of these rich musical and cultural traditions by going to Salzburg for the Cantus Salisburgensis 2014 Music Festival.

Musicians from around the world come to Salzburg each year to perform massed choral selections under the direction of Salzburg Cathedral's Music Director, János Czifra. The festival takes place in July of each year. In addition to singing in beautiful and historic venues such as Salzburg Cathedral, Golling Fortress and the Mozarteum, the choir was able to experience the delights of the city featured in the film, "The Sound of Music"

The decision to attend the Cantus Salisburger Music

Festival was a brave one for the choir, since our experience and tradition, as you our audience (Friend of the Choir) will know, relates to singing smaller and more varied pieces and music such as hymns, spirituals, songs from musical theatre and operatic choruses, etc., and without the use of music scores on stage.



The interior of Salzburg Cathedral showing 2 of the 4 organs

Nonetheless our Music Director felt we had the ability and, with his operatic experience and support, the choir was able to acquit itself well for all three major pieces: -



- Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, that is really a piano concerto with orchestra where the choir and soloists only sing (in German) for the final four minutes!
- Handel's Hallelujah Chorus (in English) that was familiar to some of our choristers who participate in the choir at Channel 9's "Carols by Candlelight".
- Mozart's "Missa Solemnis K. 337" was his last complete mass and is sung in Latin. The complete piece takes more than 20 minutes to perform, however as part of the Mass it is split into sections Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei.

Partly because of the high cost of travel to Europe in summer, less than half the choir was able to make the trip albeit as a relatively well-balanced ensemble.



Meeting up with the rest of the choir at Munich

With choir members and partners leaving home at different times, the touring party met up with their tour leader "Trixie", at the airport in Munich, and proceeded by coach to Salzburg, only two hours away. Having checked into the hotel "Neutor", we walked in light rain and through a pedestrian tunnel into the city of Salzburg, which was within easy walking distance, for a familiarisation session followed by dinner.

The following morning the choir was introduced to the Salzburg Cathedral's Director of Music – Prof. János Czifra. A native of Hungary, he has been the Cathedral Music Director since 1989. In addition to the normal services at the cathedral, he has led the cathedral choir and orchestra in events of international standing, including two papal visits, episcopal consecrations and jubilees, festivals of sacred music and symposiums.



Prof. Czifra, Lucas and the "baldies" rehearsing

Invitations from abroad and numerous concert tours have led Prof. János Czifra and the cathedral choir to the USA, Japan and many European cities.

Prof. János Czifra introduced our choir to the other attending choristers and thanked our choir for having travelled so far to perform in the festival. Then down to work and a run through the music, with him playing the piano and conducting some of the key parts of the Missa Solemnis.

The choir had lunch in a restaurant on the top of the hill overlooking the city. It was reached via a lift from the town museum that provided a great view despite the rain. Then back to work at 4.30pm for the second rehearsal, then off by coach to dinner at the Jufa Guest and Family House – a Youth and Student Hostel, for an enjoyable buffet. We then really enjoyed a 20 minutes walk back to the hotel. After breakfast, the choir party did a walking tour of the old Salzburg town. We visited the "Residenzplatz", the residence of the former prince of Archbishops in the central square and then on to St Peter's Abbey, located next to the oldest burial ground in Salzburg, which was the inspiration for the dramatic escape scene in the film "The Sound of Music".

We then went across the river to the Town Hall, formerly the Altenau Palace, where civil weddings were being performed, the Mirabella Gardens, including a children's maze and the Avenue of Mythical Gods continuing the walk to the University and the Mozarteum – a wonderful gilded small concert hall, where we had our only rehearsal for the Beethoven and Handel performances.

Because of the size of the stage and the need to accommodate the orchestra, the Beethoven and Handel pieces were sung from the floor with the audience, and with the conductor rotating from the orchestra through 180 degrees to conduct the choirs who were standing at their seats.



Nicolas Radulescu turns to conduct the choirs from the floor of the Mozarteum.

After a brief break for lunch, our choir changed into their choir uniforms and set off to the Great hall of the Mozarteum. The program for the concert was varied in its content with everything from the major orchestral and choral items by Handel and Beethoven to an Austrian Folk Dancing group, a piano, violin and female voice trio from Wesleyan College, Macon,



Georgia, the choirs from St. James Episcopal Church Choir, Georgia, USA, the National Philharmonic Choir, Washington DC, accompanied by the Varner International Orchestra, USA and the Salisburgensis Festival Orchestra, plus of course the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir.

Our choir opened with the Hallelujah Chorus with the other choirs all singing from the floor and we then performed a 12-minute program from the stage. Our program included "Men of Harlech", "Tydi a Rhoddaist" and "Gwahoddiad". We then joined the other choirs from the floor for the "Choral Fantasy".

The audience appeared to have loved the program and we were all invited to drinks and nibbles on the patio and in the garden outside the Mozarteum. As is our custom in "afterglows" we sang, this time a few choruses of "Ride the Chariot" – a song well known to our American choral friends who joined in with us, and "Senzenina" was aired, as well as other songs. Everybody had a memorable evening.

The following morning we embarked on the "Sound of Music" tour, to view the Leopoldskron Palace from across the man-made lake. This is the Palace where the "Sound of Music" was filmed. We then went on to the Gazebo in Hellbrunn and the wedding church in Mondsee – where there was in fact a wedding taking place.



The Leopoldskron Palace, the venue used as the "home" for the von Trapp family in the film "Sound of Music"

After a break for Apfelstrudel and a hot chocolate at Mondsee, we set off for Golling through the magnificent Alpine mountains. Following a beautiful lunch a local guide took us up a mountain path to see the beautiful Golling waterfall before we embarked on the coach for our concert at the Golling Fortress. The concert featured the Wesleyan College girls as well as our choir. The venue was a little cramped, but the small audience really enjoyed the concert and called for an encore. Once again we were invited to share a drink with the locals and we sang "Senzenina" for them and the ancient courtyard rang to the call and response of this African chant. Then back to Salzburg for a free evening.

On Sunday, the next morning it was bright and sunny showing us Salzburg at its best. Rehearsal was at 8.30am for the choir and orchestra in the rehearsal room of the Salzburg Cathedral. Then we trooped up the stairs to the organ loft, way above the congregation. The cathedral was completely full for the 10:00am Missa Solemnis, which went off without a hitch. The cathedral choristers were excellent and we were able to follow them in the trickier passages. It was an exhilarating experience for all who participated.

Our partners who were in the audience thought the whole choir, soloists and the orchestra sounded wonderful. A final look around the cathedral and then we were off to the farewell dinner at the Salzburg Fortress that is perched way above the city.



Enjoying the farewell dinner at the Salzburg Fortress.

We rode the Funicular to the top in brilliant sunshine and joined the rest of the Cantus Salisburgensis participants and had a great evening and to our delight an eight-piece Austrian band and twelve folk dancers entertained us. As the evening progressed we were also entertained by the ladies from Wesleyan College, a jazz duet by Simon Waters and Chenny Gan on the piano and everyone was invited on to the dance floor to join with the folk dance group. Of course there were a few raucous songs from our choristers! A wonderful night view of Salzburg was had from the Funicular on the way down from the venue and an enjoyable walk home to our hotel via the tunnel. **What a way to conclude the Salzburg visit!**

Next Issue of our newsletter features details of the Vienna component of the tour!



The choir & the girls from Wesleyan College



WE NEED YOU!

Our choir is always seeking new members, so if you are a singer and would like to join us, come along and attend one of our rehearsals and then if you feel that you would like to be part of our happy band of choristers, then audition for our choir. While we welcome basses and baritones, we would dearly love to acquire tenors!

We rehearse every Wednesday evening from 7pm to 10pm. You will be made most welcome! We rehearse at the Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Ave, Ringwood, (Melway Ref: 49 H9), or phone our President, Ieuan Thomas on 0421 391 253.

Our choir is made up of men from Wales, England, Scotland and of course Australia. We give concerts in and around Melbourne, in country Victoria, interstate and every 4 years or so we do an overseas tour, generally to participate in a choral festival.

So, take the challenge, and be part of a fine group of men, who love to sing and perform to appreciative audiences - join us you won't regret it! **Singing is good for the HEALTH and MEMORY – we perform all our concerts without music!**

BUT to be a performing chorister we also need your commitment!

**Male Choirs Association of Australia
Male Choral Festival
Australian Institute of Sports Arena,
Bruce, Canberra ACT
Sunday, November 15, 2014**

We also join with other choirs for joint concerts such as the upcoming Male Choirs Association of Australia Concert later this year in Canberra when some 300 choristers from around Australia and New Zealand will join in song at the Australian Institute of Sports Arena.

UPCOMING EVENTS . . .

- **Concert, Town Park, Croydon** - Sunday November 9, 2014, 1:15 to 2:15pm, Melway Ref: 50 K5
- **Male Choirs association of Australia Male Choral Festival**, Saturday, November 15, 2014, Australian Institute of Sport, Bruce, ACT, 2:30pm to 5:30pm
- **Christmas Concert** - Saturday, December 13, 2014, 7:00pm to 9:00pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre, 125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark. For tickets phone: 9726 5488

- **Christmas Concert** - Sunday, December 14, 2014, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre, 125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark. For tickets phone: 9726 5488
- **St. David's Day Concert** - Saturday, February 28, 2015, TBC, Karralyka Centre, Mines Road, Ringwood.
- **Gymanfa Ganu** - Sunday, March 1, 2015, TBC, St Michael's Church, 120 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Canberra, November 15, 2014:

Our choir is a member of the Male Choirs Association of Australia (MCAA) and we will be participating in this year's Massed Choirs Festival on Saturday, November 15, 2014. It is expected that 15 choirs with about 300 men will be on stage for this biennial event singing a wonderful variety of songs including *American Trilogy*, *Nella Fantasia*, *I Dreamed a Dream* and *World in Union* just to name a few. The band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, will accompany the massed choir.

This year's festival is privileged to have Dr. Guy Jansen from New Zealand as its guest Conductor. Dr. Jansen is a renowned musician and is highly sought after as the information on the following link to the MCAA website will attest:

www.malechoirsassociation.org.au/read/101/guest-conductor-dr-guy-jansen.html

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THIS NEWSLETTER:

Members of the MWMC & the Friends of our choir regularly receive our newsletter. The production of this newsletter is a joint effort. Contributions of all kinds are required from members to keep the newsletter varied and interesting. Contributions from concert supporters are also encouraged.

Editorial tasks, design, layout, printing and mail-out are by Brian Evans & Gwyn Harper. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the choir. The MWMC Newsletter articles may be reproduced by associated societies in their publications without permission, but we do insist on acknowledgement as the source.

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