



Singer of the Year 2015

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir Singer of the Year 2015 Concert



Recent Winners



Barbara Zavros 2010 Siobhan Stagg 2011 Lee Abrahamsen 2012 Stacey Alleaume 2013 Jeremy Kleeman 2014

**7 pm Saturday
19th September 2015
Karralyka Centre, Ringwood
Tickets 9870 8891**

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets

Adults: \$35 Group (6 or more) \$30 Child \$15

Heats Friday evening 11th and Saturday afternoon 12th September
Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood - Free admission
www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au 0403 271 468

While watching **Teddy Tahu Rhodes** performing recently in Victorian Opera's production of *Sweeney Todd* at the Playhouse theatre at the Victorian Arts Centre, I was struck by the fact that three of our Singer of the Year winners were also in the cast. Antoinette Halloran our winner in 1996 played Mrs Lovett, Jeremy Kleeman, last year's winner played Jonas Fogg, while Paul Batey - the winner of our initial contest in 1993 was in the ensemble. This is quite a testament to the quality of contestants we have had and continue to have for this wonderful contest.

What have our recent winners been up to

Jeremy Kleeman – last year's winner

In 2015 Jeremy Kleeman appeared in *The Flying Dutchman*, *I Puritani*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Seven Deadly Sins* for Victorian Opera.

2014 saw him perform *Colline* in *La Bohème* for New England Opera in Armidale, NSW, appear as a soloist in Victorian Opera's *Games of Love and Chance*, portray the role of *Marchese d'Obigny* in *La Traviata* for Victorian Opera and appear as *Rapunzel's Prince* in *Into the Woods*, a performance in which he was commended by Arts Hub for his "rich, dark chocolate baritone".

Stacey Alleaume – winner 2013

In October 2013, Stacey returned to Italy for a further three-month period, covering the role of *Nanetta* in Verdi's *Falstaff* at Teatro Pergolesi in Jesi,

Late in 2014, she travelled to the USA for an intense seven-week period auditioning for Young Artist Programs and coaching with distinguished artists from the Metropolitan, Los Angeles and San Francisco Operas, among others. During this tour, Stacey successfully auditioned for the highly-competitive Summer Program of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, a voice program directed by legendary mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne. She is one of only 23 out of nearly 550 applicants to gain a place in the distinguished program, and is the recipient of the *2015 Irene Cummings and Theodore Hostetler Full Scholarship in Voice*. Recent performances in Australia include Opera Australia's *Great Opera Hits* at the Sydney Opera House during the summer season, and covering the role of *Pamina* for Mainstage in January 2015. In March, Stacey performed the role of *Amore* in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in the SMH Spectrum Now Festival at the Art Gallery NSW.

Lee Abrahamsen – winner 2012

Recent Concert engagements include: Richard Strauss' *Elektra* singing *Fifth Maid* with Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House; Mahler's *Fourth Symphony* (chamber version by Klaus Simon) with Omega Ensemble at City Recital Hall, Angel Place; Richard Strauss' *Vier Letzte Lieder* with Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Musicians; Bellini's *Norma* singing *Clotilde* with Victorian Opera; *Till the Boys Come Home* ANZAC Concert at Hamer Hall with the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir; Percy Grainger's *Tribute to Foster* with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; Beethoven's *Ah Perfido* and Marshall Hall's *Long After* with Australian Doctor's Orchestra; *Geelong Waterfront Concert* with Orchestra Victoria; Guest artist at internationally renowned soprano Lisa Gasteen's recital series in Brisbane; *Misc and Monet* concert series at National Gallery of Victoria; Soloist at the Consort of Melbourne's *Grainger Celebration* at Melbourne Recital Centre; *Mimi* in *La Bohème* for Opera in the Outback in Far North Queensland.

Concert engagements overseas include: Recitals at St Martin in the Fields (London); Edinburgh International Festival (Scotland); a Recital tour spanning numerous cities in China; and a Recital in Tokyo, Japan for the International Double Reed Society Conference.

Siobhan Stagg – winner 2011

Upon completing her formal studies in June 2013, Siobhan was immediately taken into the Salzburg Festival's Young Singers Project where she performed the roles of *Konstanze* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte* für Kinder. She also sang the role of Saint Catherine in a critically-acclaimed concert performance of Braunsfel's *Jeanne D'Arc* with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra and conductor Manfred Honeck.

Following her time in Salzburg, Siobhan joined the Deutsche Oper Berlin as a young artist for the 2013/14 season, where she made her debut singing the *Woodbird* (Siegfried) and *Woglinde* (Das Rheingold) in the Ring Cycle conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. After success with featured roles including *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte* and *Sophie* in *Werther*, Siobhan was invited to stay on at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; the theatre which has now become her 'artistic home'. Over the next two seasons in Berlin, Siobhan will sing *Sophie* in *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Blonde* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* as well as reprising her signature role as *Pamina*.

In her first European season, Siobhan also made her Hamburg State Opera debut as *Cordelia* in Aribert Reimann's *Lear* conducted by Simone Young. She sang *Woglinde* in *REIN GOLD* at the Staatsoper Berlin and performed with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra under Maestro Alfred Eschwe.

Siobhan has had notable success in several major singing competitions, most recently the *2014 Belvedere Singing Competition* where she won the Prize of the International Media-Jury, and the *2014 International Mozart Competition* in Salzburg,



where she was also awarded the Special Prize for Best Interpretation of a Strauss song.

Meanwhile Siobhan's star continues to rise in her native Australia. While still a student, her debut Lieder-album *'Hymne à l'amour'* was nominated for Best Classical Album in the 2013 Australian Independent Music Awards. She is in demand with all the state symphony orchestras and performs annually as part of the Melbourne Recital Centre's *'Local Heroes'* concert series.

In 2013 Siobhan won First Prize in the Stuart Burrows International Voice Award in Wales. In 2012 she was awarded First Prize and the Audience Choice Award in the Mietta Song Competition in Melbourne and won the Italian Opera Foundation Award in Sydney. In 2011 she won the jury's First Prize and the Audience Choice Award at the Meistersinger Vocal Competition in Graz, Austria, as well as our MWMC 'Singer of the Year' competition in Melbourne.

Barbara Zavros – winner 2010

In 2011 Barbara won the 87th Herald Sun Aria.

After completing her formal studies, Barbara performed with Opera Australia's OzOpera Schools Tour in Victoria for several years. Her operatic roles with the company include *Rosina (The Barber of Seville)*, *Catherine/Cassandra (The Sound Garden)*, *Clown/Juggler (Sid the Serpent)*, *Gretel/Witch/Mother/Fairy (Hansel and Gretel)*.

Other operatic roles include *Tamiri (Il Re Pastore)*, *Barbarina (Le Nozze di Figaro)* and *Micaela (Carmen)*.

For Victorian Opera's 2012 season Barbara covered *Countess Almaviva (Le Nozze Di Figaro)* and covered and performed the role of *Anne Trulove (The Rake's Progress)*.

In 2014 Barbara also performed the role of *Leila (The Pearl Fishers)* for Melbourne Opera. (Note in that performance of the Pearl Fishers, one of our baritones - Geoff King - sang in the chorus).

Anthems the greatest songs of all time



Our joint concert with the Frankston Ladies choir on Sunday 12th July, was enjoyed hugely by performers and audience. It had been preceded by two equally enjoyable joint rehearsals in our Ringwood male fortress, where our drab 'GOM' (Grumpy Old Men) atmosphere had been transformed by the presence of 30 colourful, cheerful, chatty young ladies, many half our age.

They were even more colourful on the day of the concert, where we started off singing serious stuff together, such as *'Jerusalem'* and *'You Raise Me Up'*, followed by a brighter bracket of songs by the ladies, and a sober bracket of mostly Welsh songs by the men.

The ladies started the second half brightly with songs like *'All That Jazz'*, followed by some spirituals from the men. The final (joint) bracket had everything from Handel's *'Hallelujah Chorus'* to

Freddie Mercury's *'Bohemian Rhapsody'*. It was an eclectic mixture and a great concert.

The common link between our choirs is our cheerful *'Falstaffian'* accompanist, Simon Walters, who is also the versatile Musical Director and accompanist for the Frankston Ladies. To cement the link on this occasion, the ladies had organised a relaxing 'Afterglow' party at Taggart's Restaurant in Frankston for all performers and their guests. We're seriously planning another joint concert next year, possibly in Pakenham - we do like parties - so watch this space!

Vale Lionel Brown

On Monday 10th August, 30 members of the choir joined a large number of family and friends, at a funeral in Elsternwick, to say farewell to Lionel Edward Brown, a loyal friend and first tenor, who had passed away on the 2nd August. During the ceremony, we sang *'Danny Boy'* and *'American Trilogy'*, particular favourites of Lionel, and we formed a 'guard of honour' afterwards.



The Celebrant, choir member Ron Thomas, described Lionel as "Chirpy as a cricket, faithful as a shaggy dog, and reliable as the Sun sets in the West and rises in the East".

Lionel was born in Brighton, Victoria, in 1929, raised in Upwey in the Dandenongs, apprenticed as an electrician, working as a Leading Hand for the S. E. C. at Sub-Stations in Benalla, Shepparton and Eildon for most of his life.

A polished ballroom dancer, he met his first wife Beverley at a dance in the St. Kilda Town Hall. They married in 1962 and had two children, Stuart and Heather, who remembered him as a kind and loving, immensely practical, father, whose advice to them was "Never leave a job or a task until it was finished". Sadly, Beverley died from a respiratory illness in 1997, almost a repeat of his mother's experience, who nursed his father for a similar period till he died when Lionel was only ten years old. Three years later he met and married Ruby, and they began to travel extensively.

Lionel was a keen squash player for some 60 years, reaching pennant level. He was also a very successful bee-keeper, having studied the subject at Burnley Agricultural College, and won a number of first prizes at The Royal Melbourne Show.

"Vale" Lionel, we will miss your smile and your cheery "Hallo" on Wednesdays

Meet our choristers

In our newsletters we plan to introduce one or two of our choristers who have recently joined our choir. In Alby van Berkel and Colin Brown we have two recent inductees to the choir.

They will describe in their own words who they are and why they joined Melbourne Welsh male Choir.



Alby Van Berkel



I was born in Holland in 1949 and am one of 11 children.

Our family migrated to Australia in 1953 and they first settled in Monbulk; I recall the strong congregational singing in our local church, made up mainly of Dutch migrants.

Ten years later we moved to Traralgon where my father established a plant nursery.

I was educated at Assumption College, Kilmore and St. Paul's College Traralgon. My University studies were completed at Monash University in 1973 with a BSc and a Dip Ed. Since then I have held teaching positions in Broken Hill, Sale, Melbourne and PNG.

After marrying my wife, Helen, we returned to Traralgon to raise our family – 3 children and I have taught at my old college for the last 32 years, specialising in mathematics.

We live in Glengarry, just out of Traralgon, and have recently retired. I now enjoy gardening, bushwalking, several volunteer activities, and of course, singing with the choir.

I am not sure where my love of music comes from, but I did sing in the school choir in Kilmore, and later with the St. Cecilia Choir of Gippsland. I have joined the baritone section of the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir.

Colin Brown



I was born in Feilding, New Zealand, 8th July, 1943 and educated to School Certificate level in Palmerston North.

I completed an apprenticeship to R&E Tingey as glassworker/lead lighter in Palmerston North.

At the early age of 13 until 15 I had a voice coach (George Scott Morrison) and competed in local Eisteddfods and was a member of local church choir.

On joining Palmerston North Repertory Society in 1960 I performed as a choir member in productions of "Oklahoma" and "Bless the Bride" (as a cowboy and dancing waiter).

I started singing as one half of the duo "Bobbin Robins" 1961/2. We won Wellington and Manawatu Talent Quests and recorded radio tracks on Radio 2ZA and 2ZB.

I took the role of lead singer with Peter Wood's Aces group for 5 years at Newbury Country Club.

I moved to Wellington in 1969 and I became the resident singer at Grand Hotel, Wellington and also the lead singer with pop group "40 Watt Banana". We gained a recording contract with EMI, Wellington, and under producer Peter Dawkins performed on NZBC TV and Radio.

During that time I toured with many New Zealand artists, and was a guest vocalist at the New Zealand Jazz Festival in Tauranga 1967/8. We emigrated to Australia in 1972 and I worked at Channel "O" with Jeff Phillips. During this time I had the privilege of working with many legendary musicians including Eartha Kitt, Kenny Ball & Jazzmen, and Acker Bilk

I became the resident vocalist at "Leonda" Richmond and "Butleigh Wootten" Kew, with frequent gigs at Jazz After Dark, at the Concert Centre Basement, St. Kilda Road with Trev Powell Trio and had a guest spot at National Jazz Festival at Ballarat. I sang with Small

Welsh Choir, under Bill Mead, at Parliament House Victoria, and RACV Club, which was my introduction to Welsh choirs.

My wife Robyn and I have been married for 43 years and have two daughters and five grandchildren.

I spent 14 years with Toyota Motor Corporation Australia in sales and marketing and am currently the owner operator of Weron Pty Ltd as Motor Industry Consultant.

I joined the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir in 2015 as a 2nd tenor.

Our Treasurer's report on the 2015 Cornwall Festival

As the committee are planning for the choir to attend the Cornwall International Male Voice Choir Festival in 2017, our treasurer, Paul Gawthorn, included the 2015 festival in his planned holiday in the UK.

The Cornwall Festival is held every 2 years and the concerts we attended demonstrated the comprehensive organisational skills of the Festival Committee. We had the privilege of seeing some of the 70 choirs from 13 nations enjoying a wonderful time of music making, companionship, fun and competition. Choirs sang in 50 events at 40 locations across Cornwall.

We arrived in Newquay on Friday 1st May and attended the regional concert at St. Michael's church. There were 4 choirs singing that evening. The acoustics of the church were fairly good and a reasonably large audience was in attendance. We enjoyed all the choirs, but the piece de resistance were Männerstimmen Basel.

We were so impressed by their performance that we bought one of their CDs. This choir, from Switzerland, were fantastic, mostly singing A capella. One very moving piece they performed, recently written for them, was a combination of Christian and Muslim music and sounds from the time of the crusades and then went to modern times. They went on to win the International Choir Championship.



On the Saturday we went to a lunchtime concert at Truro Cathedral which was beautiful with the sound of the choirs echoing through the magnificent Victorian Gothic arches.

All too quickly that concert was over and we walked the couple of blocks to the Hall for Cornwall. This reasonably modern hall provided good viewing and sound of the competition choirs. Understandably the choristers seemed a little nervous but their performance was of a very high standard.

We had planned to see the Eden Project on our travels, and it made a lot of sense to go and see it on the Sunday and hear a number of choirs singing there.





The choirs sang with amplification which provided good sound coverage within the biodome they sang in and even outside. There were not enough places to sit and listen to the choirs and see them at the same time in the biodome so this discouraged people from staying to listen for long.

Our next attendance was the International Gala Concert. This event, in the Hall for Cornwall, was the closing event for the festival. The standard of performance was very high with 6 choirs including Dagilelis, a Lithuanian mixed adult and boys choir. This choir had amazing precision and were an absolute highlight of the concert.

In all of the concerts there were always choirs with amazing precision and musical ability. There were also choirs that were very entertaining. Some even had both of these qualities. The energy and enthusiasm and sheer enjoyment witnessed at all concerts were a genuine pleasure to observe.

This year I was an audience member at 5 concerts at the Cornwall festival and greatly enjoyed each. I am certainly looking forward to attending it in 2017 as a participant.

Teddy Tahu Rhodes Concert

Songs from around the world

Teddy Tahu Rhodes is famous for his portrayal of Mozart's Don Giovanni but he has proved his versatility in many other musical fields. Here he will be singing songs from stage and screen, from such shows as South Pacific, Les Misérables and Sweeney Todd.

He is joined by the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir, fresh from their tour of Salzburg and Vienna, singing popular songs from around the world.

Presented by Melbourne Welsh Male Choir.

Sunday 15th November 2015 3pm
Melbourne Recital Centre
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall

Box Office 03 9699 3333 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
Bookings www.melbournerecital.com.au
Find us on Facebook Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

....have you bought your tickets yet?

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir



Our choir is always seeking new members! If you are a singer and would like to join us in song, visit our webpage: www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/newmembers

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Monash Sings for Kids** – St. Stephens and St. Marys Anglican Church, High Street, Mount Waverley ([map](#)) Sunday 30th Aug from 2:00pm
- **SOTY Heats** Federation Estate, Ringwood ([map](#)). Friday 11th and Saturday 12th September,
- **Singer of the Year** Karalyka Theatre, Ringwood ([map](#)) 7:00 p.m. Saturday, 19th September, 2015, tickets: 9870 8891 www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets
- **Concert for Tuckers Geelong** St Mary's Basilica, Geelong ([map](#)) 2:30 p.m. Thursday, 1 October (free) tickets available from Tuckers phone: 5221 4788
- **Teddy & the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir** Melbourne Recital Centre, Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Southbank, Melbourne ([map](#)) 3 p.m. Sunday, 15th November, 2015, Tickets are available from the Recital Centre, Tel: 03 9699 3333 www.melbournerecital.com.au

CHOIR DIRECTORY

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THIS NEWSLETTER: The production of this newsletter is a joint effort. Contributions of all kinds are sought from members to keep the newsletter varied and interesting. We also welcome contributions from our supporters.

Editorial tasks, design, layout, printing and mail-out are by Gwyn Harper, Ieuan Thomas & Mike Lyons. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the choir. The MWMC Newsletter articles may be reproduced, but we do insist on acknowledgement as the source. All articles, sketches, photographs, etc., that are contributed by members are published on this condition. The choir will endeavour at all times to seek permission to reproduce material from other sources and/or acknowledge the source as appropriate. Details of the previous SOTY winners were taken from their publicly accessible websites.

Basic Newsletter format by Brian Evans