

## A New Venue for our Singer of the Year Concert

For the Choir's 2016 Singer of the Year competition on 10th September, we will be moving to the Knox School Auditorium, 220 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South. This is being done to offer both the Singer of the Year competitors and our patrons more of a concert hall atmosphere than was possible in the Karralyka Theatre.



*The Knox School Auditorium*

The acoustics of the auditorium will better reflect the soloist's voices and the choir will hopefully sound better too. In addition our patrons will have more leg room. Seating is a little more limited so be sure to purchase your tickets early. As usual the heats of the competition will be held at our rehearsal facility (Rooms 1 & 2) at Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood, on two consecutive days - Friday 2nd September in the evening and the following Saturday afternoon. This is possibly the best free entertainment in Melbourne and the competitors appreciate having an audience, so come along and listen to some of the best young voices in Australia as they vie for the opportunity of competing for the honour (and the cash) associated with the Singer of the Year competition.

While we are talking about the Singer of the Year competition, you might be interested to know that a number of our previous winners and finalists have recently appeared in Wagner's Tannhäuser at the Regent theatre, Melbourne. Lee Abrahmsen - who was the Choir's guest artist for Morning Melodies in 2015, and our SOTY winner in 2012, played Princess Elizabeth, while last year's winner - Michael Lampard played Biterolf. Eddie Muliaumaseali'i a SOTY finalist from 2001 - played Herman, Landgrave of Thuringia. A name like Eddie Muliaumaseali'i is extremely hard to pronounce, as our compere found on the evening of the Singer of the Year final in 2001, and while he did not win (John Bode won on that occasion), we were all confident that Eddie's beautiful bass voice would take him places, which it has.

As a footnote, the Melbourne Opera Chorus, which was very good, included Jeff King one of our own baritones.

## Recent Concerts by the Choir



### Wyndham Cultural Centre

After an absence of some years, the Choir returned to the Wyndham Cultural Centre in Werribee and, with another of our Singer of the Year finalists - Kate Amos (who is currently performing in Victorian Opera's Laughter and Tears at the Palais Theatre), performed a number of songs from the shows, together with a couple of old favourites like Danny Boy and American Trilogy. At the end of the performance the choir received a standing ovation and the patrons went home well satisfied. We look forward to a repeat performance in what is a very attractive venue.

### Salvation Army Centre Ringwood

The Choir was invited to take part in a fund raising concert, together with "our neighbours", the Maroondah Salvation Army Brass band at their concert hall in Wantirna Road, Ringwood on Saturday evening 18th June.

The choir sang a couple of brackets of songs and performed two songs "Where Shall I Be" and "Cwm Rhondda (Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah)" with the band.

Despite the cramped arrangements for the choristers on stage the audience appeared to love the evening and the event coordinator declared the evening a musical and financial success.

### Choir Profile

#### The new Choir Treasurer - David Phillips

In our last issue we profiled our incoming President Paul Gawthorn and it seems fair that we also profile the man who replaces him as treasurer - David Phillips.

A second tenor, David is another of our choristers who travel major distances to attend rehearsal each week. His home is in Bacchus Marsh and he holds the record for being the most distant chorister on the northern side of Melbourne. Our choristers from Gippsland possibly have further to travel but they tend to travel as a group and have a more direct route. They all deserve our thanks for their commitment.

*Here is David's profile.*

As a school-boy in England during the 60's and early 70's, I sang with school and representative choirs competing in a number of competitions around the Midlands. However, rugby, my sporting passion took over, playing with Kenilworth in the UK and with Melbourne University, here in Melbourne. The only 'choral' singing was in the bar after the games.

An endearing memory, whilst playing for Kenilworth, was hearing the Llanelli Male Choir sing 'Men of Harlech' one Saturday night in the Kenilworth Rugby Club bar.

I moved to Australia almost 35 years ago with my wife Sally and currently work for an IT consulting firm. We have two children, Joanne - who is now training as a nurse and Matthew - who is a pastry chef and baker in Kyneton. Matthew is also training with Roger Howell with an ambition to be an opera singer - a tenor. My ambition is to get him to sing with the choir.

Whilst always having an interest in music, I only returned to singing some 6 years ago after joining the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir - it was something that needed to be ticked off the 'to do list'.

I count as some of my highlights (so far) singing at Hamer Hall in front of an audience of over 2,000 people, listening to and then singing with Bryn Terfel at the Melbourne Welsh Church, and performing with Teddy Tahu-Rhodes at a packed Recital Centre.

In addition to singing with Melbourne Welsh, I have also performed in the Chorus of Melbourne Opera, performing in Fidelio (by Beethoven), La Bohème and Madam Butterfly - this too was a great buzz.

Whilst working in Hong Kong for three months, I took the opportunity to practice with the Hong Kong Welsh Male Choir - another great choir. My ambition is to now try and arrange a joint concert with them at some time in the future.

The move from playing rugby to singing in the choir is well known in Wales and yes it is true, singing does feed the soul and mind. After a busy or stressful week, singing at rehearsal, each Wednesday night, or at a concert allows you to forget all those stresses, at least for a few hours.



*David (on the left) with Bryn Terfel at our Soiree in the Welsh Church last year*

## Our new bass recruit - Michael Rogers

I was born into a sawmilling and tree felling family in Brymbo, North Wales in 1969.

Despite the obvious benefits of being fit and strong with an enormous chopper at my disposal, I decided the life of the lumberjack was not for me. I ventured to Swansea University, where I graduated as a simple country boy Mechanical Engineer.

I've never had a career, more a series of quite different jobs. I entered teaching at 24 and left the profession 2 years later aged 86 - a stressful place, the classroom.

A stint in automotive engineering followed, often being scared witless by crazed test drivers, before I found myself, quite unintentionally, but in many ways fortunately, in the world of trains.

It was in the romantic environment of a train factory in Birmingham that I met my Australian lawyer wife, Sally. I'd be most grateful if someone could remind me what it feels like to win an argument.

After trains came a project management role at Duracell, where I alternated between feeling fully charged and completely drained.

Sally and I married in 2006 and in December of that year with our very young son, Elwyn, we moved to Australia.

Soon after arriving, I was offered employment by a major rail, building and infrastructure company - who still haven't found me out. My first job was in Parkes, NSW (a prospect which thrilled Sally!). We then moved to Perth, where soon after our arrival our daughter Tegwen was born - Parkes was not awash with things to do of an evening.

We moved to Melbourne in 2009 and intend to stick around for a while.

I was a late developer when it comes to music. I still bear the mental scars of being told at the age of eight by a balding, moustachioed primary school teacher that I had a terrible voice and could not sing.

I ignored advice to have my voice trained whilst at University. It wasn't until I felt the impending doom of my 30th birthday approaching that I decided to find out if I had any kind of voice at all. I was told I had (*take that Mr Baldwin*), and a couple of weeks later joined the Coventry Philharmonic.





I sang several works including Pergolesi's Magnificat, Vivaldi's Gloria, Schubert's Mass in G and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony. They even let me sing solo occasionally.

After two years with the 'Phil, work commitments meant I couldn't give the choir the devotion it deserved so I left, and so started a 15 year sabbatical.

My family finally tired of my singing in the house and subtly suggested I might like to sing somewhere else - support, that's what family is all about.

So, here I am among the rich and mellifluous sound that is the bass section. I think I'm fitting in. I have already been compared to Bryn Terfel. Just the other week, a fellow choir member who shall remain nameless (*although I can tell you his name starts with "G" and ends with "wyn"*) said, "You know Mike, compared to Bryn Terfel you really are rubbish".

Never mind. I can say with a high level of confidence I am singing all the right notes, and pretty soon I hope to be singing them in the right order.

In my spare time, ski jumping, hang gliding and sword swallowing are all things I have no intention of trying.

As a family we love cycling, hiking and camping. Both of our children are into music, tennis and swimming. Watching their skills develop is wonderful.

My long awaited return to weight training has stalled several times over the last few years, although last week I did manage to train my dumbbells to sit, stay and play dead.

## CORNWALL INTERNATIONAL MALE CHORAL festival 27th April - 1st May 2017

*We're off to Cornwall in 2017 - more information in future newsletters*

### **A Welsh election joke**

*After his council election win, Dai insisted on everyone calling him Councillor Jones.*

*Coming back late from the pub after celebrating, he made a right noise trying to get into his house.*

*"Is that you Dai?" shouted his wife down the stairs.*

*"Certainly not," he replied drunkenly. "It's Councillor Jones."*

*"Well, come up quick then, we've only got a few minutes before Dai comes back from the pub."*

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### **Sponsorship**

The choir is actively seeking sponsors, in particular for our Singer of the Year Concert. If you would like to be associated with this wonderful event please contact any member of the choir's committee and we will be delighted to work with you to make the most of your sponsorship.

The choir is also available for commercial and sporting events, anniversaries, weddings etc.,

Please contact me, or any committee member to discuss these opportunities.

Gwyn Harper 0419 562 353

### **Looking For New Members**

The choir is always keen to attract new members. If you are interested in seeing how the choir works, then come along to any rehearsal 7.30 pm Wednesday at Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood and you will be made very welcome.

The rehearsal facility is excellent with comfortable seats, good acoustics and possibly the best conductor and accompanist combination in Melbourne.

You will be made to feel very welcome and whether you wish to sit with our wives and occasional guests at the side and listen to the choir, or sit within the body of the choir and sing along with us, the choice is yours.

Herb Jenkins, a long time stalwart of the choir, looks after our new and prospective members and will ensure you are properly introduced and equipped with the relevant music scores.

We have a break for tea or coffee at every rehearsal so there is the opportunity to chat to choir members over a cuppa and, on the first Wednesday in the month, one of the sections will provide the choir and visitors with a (sometimes) sumptuous supper.

Car parking is plentiful and free, while Ringwood station is a 5 minute walk away.

Come along on a Wednesday evening and we will welcome you.

A couple of sessions and an audition and you could be singing in one of our concerts within weeks and possibly joining us on our tour to UK in April 2017



## Melbourne Welsh Male Choir



### Singer of the Year 2016

**7 pm Saturday  
10 th September 2016**

**The Knox School Auditorium  
220 Burwood Highway  
Wantirna South**

**Tickets 9720 4336**

[www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets)

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

#### Competition Heats

**Friday evening 2nd and**

**Saturday afternoon 3rd September**

**Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue,**

**Ringwood Free admission**

**For Heat times check website**

**or 0403 271 468 from 28th August**

#### Upcoming Events

*2 pm Sunday, 28 August*

*Guest Artists with Australian Youth Band*

*MLC 207 Barkers Rd, Kew VIC 3101,*

*Tickets available: [trybooking.com/209685](http://trybooking.com/209685)*

*or telephone: 0419 540 288*

#### **Singer of the Year Heats (free entry)**

**Friday evening 2nd September**

**Saturday afternoon 3rd September**

**Room 1 Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood**

*Times not known until 31st August - 0403 271 468*

*Saturday 10th September 2016 7 :00 p.m.*

*Singer of the Year Concert*

*The Knox School Auditorium*

*220 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South*

*Tickets 9720 4336 or online*

*[www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets)*

#### **Friday aftnoon 7th October**

**Tuckers Seniors Concert**

**St Mary's Basilica, Geelong**

**Tickets available from Tuckers phone: 5221 4788**

#### **1.30 pm Tuesday 11th October**

*Maroondah Seniors week*

*Karralyka Centre, Ringwood*

#### **2 pm Sunday 23rd October**

*From Gershwin to Queen (with lots in-between)*

*Joint Concert with Frankston Ladies Choir*

*at Kingston Performing Arts Centre*

*985 Nepean Highway - next to Moorabin station*

*Tickets 9720 4336 or online*

*[www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets)*

*For more information on these concerts visit*

*[www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/concerts](http://www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/concerts)*

Each year since 1993 we have held a competition for young singers up to the age of 35, regularly attracting over 30 very impressive entrants. This year, with the help of sponsorship, we are offering \$7,000 in prizemoney. The heats will be held at Maroondah Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood on Friday evening 2nd September and Saturday afternoon 3rd September. The three finalists will then perform at our Singer of the Year Concert, held at The Knox School Auditorium, 220 Burwood Hwy, Knox at 7pm on Saturday 10th September.

#### Contacts

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