

Singer of the Year 2016

This year's Singer of the Year competition was held on 10th September, at the Knox School Auditorium, 220 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South. The venue met our requirements for improved acoustics for both Competitors and choir and our audience was treated to a wonderful evening of song. The venue was however not very wheelchair friendly and to accommodate our ageing audience we will be looking for a different venue for next year's final.

The winner on the night was Kate Amos. Kate was

also a finalist in 2012. She will use the prize money to continue her training in Wales at the Cardiff International Academy of Voice. The other finalists were mezzo-soprano Bronte Zemlic and baritone Nicholas Jones. With last year's adjudicator now the choir's Music Director, the judging panel was increased by Graeme and Margot Wall. Both Margot and Graeme spent much of their life on stage, performing and competing in some of Australia's most prestigious events and competitions. Graeme won the Sydney Sun Aria and Margot is a former recipient of the Melba Scholarship from the Melba Conservatorium, Melbourne, and the winner of the highly regarded ABC Concerto and Vocal Competition – an opportunity that gave Margot the leg up she needed in the opera-arena – and inspirational fodder for Margot's passion project that today sees her together with Graeme, launch the careers of many young Australian opera singers. Margot, and Graeme Wall, are co-directors of Opera Scholars Australia, a not-for-profit program that fosters the talent of up and coming young singers and providing them with opportunities, similar to their own career-break, to further their talents and perform. Graeme and Margot are also the organisers of Opera in the Alps (Beechworth) and Opera in the Market (Queen Victoria Market, Melbourne). We are indeed fortunate to have such talented and committed individuals as adjudicators.

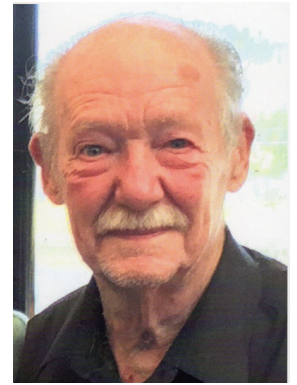
On a somewhat poignant note, our longtime Singer of the Year accompanist Janet Perkins passed away in April, due to illness, and the choir was fortunate to secure the services of Simon Bruckard, full time staff member and repetiteur for Opera Victoria as her replacement. As mentioned by the compere on the night, in the heats of the competition one of the competitors supplied Simon with a score, which had the last page missing. Such are Simon's skills that his improvisation was totally unnoticed by the audience.



Finalists: Bronte Zemlic, Kate Amos, Nicholas Jones

Vale Herb Jenkins

It is with a deep sadness that we report the death of one of our longest serving chorists, bass - Herb Jenkins. The oldest man in the choir, although he never looked it, and a member for twenty-eight years, Herb was a gentle man and represented all that is good in our choir. Quietly spoken, Herb was the meet and greet person for new members of the choir, gently introducing them to other choir and committee members. Herb was an integral part of the choir for our performances in South Africa, Atlanta, USA and Powell River, Canada



Herb took on the role of music librarian and would supply new members with the scores for the current repertoire until people were sufficiently proficient with the choir's website to be able to download their own copies. He was also the source of a number of jokes and humorous anecdotes, which were percolated by email to other choir members.

One of the most regular attendees, Herb was an exemplary choir member who always knew his part, was the first to volunteer for any task and was a voice of sanity within the various choir committees over the years.

He was given a great send-off with almost the full choir and many former members attending his funeral service in Heathmont to sing his spirit home. The choir sang 'He Ain't Heavy' - a fitting tribute to a friend and colleague.

God speed Herb, your presence and jovial companionship will be sorely missed.



Well known Melbourne singing teacher Bettine McCaughan OAM died on 15th August. Bettine was a highly successful teacher of young singers, having taught 7 Melbourne Sun Aria winners and guided many to international careers, notably baritones Jonathan Summers, John Fulford, Lucas de Jong, and sopranos Eilileen Hannan and Sharon Kempton. She was the teacher of our MD David Ashton Smith for his first 10 years of singing. Bettine was a founder member of the ANATS [Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing] and a sought after adjudicator. Many of her students participated in the Melbourne Welsh Choir Singer of the Year competition over the years. She will be sadly missed.'



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

Gearing up for Cornwall April 2017

As some of our Friends of the Choir will know, the choir has accepted an invitation to be part of the Cornwall International Choral festival, held over five days in and around Truro, Cornwall at what is possibly the largest festival for male choirs in the world

The organisers have assembled a fantastic line-up for next year's festival with 60 choirs from Australia, Czech Republic, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, USA, England, Scotland, Wales..... and Cornwall!

Plus, there will be a huge competition in both the up to, and over 41, choir member classes, delivering a competition to rival any other Male Choir Festival in the World.

The choirs will enjoy a wonderful time of music making, fun and competition, singing in over 50 events at 40 locations including Truro cathedral and the Hall for Cornwall, plus regional towns across Cornwall.

Recent Concerts by the Choir

Monash Sing for Kids – 20 August

The choir is always interested in supporting charitable causes and as a result we have become a regular participant in this annual event run by Waverley Lions Club at St Stephens and St Mary's Anglican Church, High Street Road, Mount Waverley.

This year's performance was interesting since it included a number of new choirs including the Frankston Ladies Choir, and so our accompanist Simon Walters had twice as much to do.

The event really deserves a bigger audience but the Lions Club appeared to be very pleased with all the choir's contributions and hopefully raised money for Monash Children's Hospital



Australian Youth Band – 28 August

It is not very often that the choir gets invited to appear as guests on someone else's programme, however that was the case for the concert by the Australian Youth Band performance at the James Tatoulis Auditorium, Methodist Ladies College in Barker's Road, Kew.

The choir sang one bracket of songs, with the band and then sat back and relaxed as part of the large audience and enjoyed the performance by these highly talented young musicians under their Music Director Richard O'Toole.

The combination of youthful musicians and a more senior choir seemed to go down well with the audience and we look forward to more collaborative ventures with these talented youngsters in future.



Tuckers' Seniors Concert in Geelong - 7th October

Our annual engagement to sing at St Mary's Basilica, Geelong (this was our 14th consecutive annual performance) was the first time for our new Music Director, David Ashton-Smith, to experience the beautiful acoustics of this grand old building. It was also the first time Colin Brown and Kevin Seerup had performed there as soloists.

The venue was packed as usual, and the standing ovation at the end of the performance virtually ensured that we continue the tradition next year.

From Gershwin to Queen - 23 October

Our joint concert with the Frankston Ladies Choir was this year held on Sunday 23rd October at the Kingston Performing Arts Centre, Moorabbin. The venue was roughly equidistant from the home base of both choirs but accessible by each to hopefully capture a newer and somewhat different audience in addition to our loyal followers.

Featuring arrangements of Queen songs by our accompanist Simon Walters, who is also the music director of the Frankston Ladies Choir, the joint choir collaborative pieces "Somebody to Love" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" together with songs from "Les Miserables" were the highlights of the afternoon. A highly appreciative crowd



went home happily tapping their feet to the well-known songs from musical theatre.

Without a Welsh song in the programme (for the first time) some of our faithful Choir followers felt a little short changed, an omission we will try to avoid in our future programming.

Royal Melbourne Golf Club - 10 November

As an example of the choir's versatility, we were engaged by the Royal Melbourne Golf Club to provide impromptu pre-dinner entertainment for a group of predominantly American golfers and their partners during the Alister MacKenzie tournament at the Club.

The choir sang a bracket of songs, which included "New York, New York" and "American Trilogy" which, despite the background noise and clinking of glasses, generated great applause from a somewhat surprised but appreciative audience.

Prospective corporate organisers are welcome to communicate with us to see what we can add to any major event

Sponsorship

The choir is actively seeking sponsors in particular for our overseas trip to Cornwall, together with continual funding for our Singer of the Year Concert.

If you would like to be associated with either of these wonderful events 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.

As can be seen from the recent function at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, the choir is available for commercial and sporting events, anniversaries, weddings etc.,

So if you require anything from a flash mob to a full two-hour concert please contact me, or any committee member to discuss such opportunities.

Gwyn Harper

Upcoming Events

Mooroolbark Christmas Concerts

Sat, December 17, 7:00pm – 9:30pm and

Sun, December 18, 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Mooroolbark Community Centre,

125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark VIC 3138,

tickets: from Mooroolbark Community Centre

Ph: 9726 5488

St David's Day Concert

Sunday afternoon 5th March 2017

Venue to be advised, but our guest soloist is

Baritone Samuel Dundas - Singer of the Year

winner 2009, currently a major soloist with

Australian Opera in Sydney He will fly down and

back on Sunday specifically for our concert

Melbourne Welsh Church Gymanfa Ganu

Sunday, February 26th 2017

St. Michael's On Collins

3:00pm Gymanfa Ganu service

Guest Conductor: Mr. Edward-Rhys Harry

from the village of Penclawdd, on the North Coast of

The Gower Peninsula, Wales.

Guest Soloist: Mr. Kees Huysman,

Blue Riband winner

at the 2016 National Eisteddfod of Wales

For more information on these concerts visit

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/concerts

The choir goes into recess following the Mooroolbark

concert 18th December, starting back on

Wednesday evening 25th January.

While choir members are in Cornwall and travelling

overseas, there will be no rehearsals from 26th April to

26th May, resuming on Wednesday evening 31st May

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