

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir's 2018 Singer of the Year Competition

A packed house (with extra chairs being required for late arrivals), at the MLC's James Tatoulis Auditorium on Sunday afternoon 12th August enjoyed a wonderful and extremely varied afternoon of solo and choral singing.

This beautiful auditorium provided a perfect environment for the finalists of the Choir's 2018 Singer of the Year competition to be heard and evaluated.

This year there was an additional reason to attend this event. Our MD's "other Choir" - the **Ashton Smith Singers** joined us on this very special occasion.

The audience was able to hear the differences between a mixed choir and a traditional Welsh male choir in this magnificent environment



The choirs sang individual brackets as well as combining for some wonderful renditions of audience favourites such as World in Union and American Trilogy among others. Having nearly ninety voices with six part harmonies really made the auditorium resound.

The winner of the competition this year was baritone **Stephen Marsh** with equal runners-up sopranos **Jessica Carrascalão Heard** and **Michelle McCarthy**.

The trophy and cheques were presented by one of our major sponsors **Cameron Semak** from **Brighton Infiniti**.

In the photograph below the Singer of the year winner Stephen Marsh is flanked by Michelle McCarthy and Jessica Carrascalão Heard on his right with adjudicator Margaret Arnold and accompanist Phillipa Safey on his left.



We, as a choir get great satisfaction from seeing the progress of our Singer of the Year winners and runners-up, so we were delighted to see the great reviews which our 2012 winner, Lee Abrahmsen received for her role of Marschallin in the recent Melbourne Opera production of Der Rosenkavalier by Richard Strauss. Well done Lee.

Recent Choir concerts

On a cold and wintry July Friday in Nunawading a group of similarly dressed gentlemen with navy suits and yellow ties descended on two car dealerships and made music!

The choir performed a mini concert to the audience of customers and staff at the Eastside Mitsubishi dealership and received an enthusiastic reception. After an hour-long concert, the choir moved 300 metres down the road to Nunawading Toyota and after appropriate sustenance and lubrication (water only!) supplied by our hosts, we repeated the performance for an enthusiastic audience of clients and staff of the Toyota dealership to a similar ovation.

The choir has sung in some strange places, organ lofts in cathedrals in Austria, a circus tent in South Africa, on different levels in the Melbourne Gaol and in the round in the galleries at the State Library of Victoria, so the choir simply took the car showroom locations in it's stride.

The acoustics in both showrooms were surprisingly good and we look forward to repeating the event in future.



*A Welsh farmer drove to a neighbour's farmhouse and knocked at the door. A boy, about 9, opened the door.
"Is your dad or your mum home?" said the farmer. "No, they went to town."
"How about your brother, Howard? Is he here?" "No, he went with Mum and Dad."
The farmer stood there for a few minutes, shifting from one foot to the other, and mumbling to himself. "I know where all the tools are, if you want to borrow one, or I can give dad a message," said the boy.
"Well," said the farmer uncomfortably, "I really wanted to talk to your Dad. It's about your brother, Howard, getting my daughter Susie pregnant".
The boy thought for a moment...
"You would have to talk to Dad about that. I know he charges £500 for the bull and £50 for the pig, but I don't know how much he charges for Howard."*



Choir Member Profile

Baritone - David Simm

Our long-term member profile in this edition of the newsletter is one of the characters of the choir David Simm. David was born in Wales but speaks with an Australian/Cockney accent. A former president of the choir, David led the choir's trip to Canada and is currently the choir's vice president.



David Grant Simm

Born 1st August 1940 in Gwaelod-y-Garth, Glamorgan, South Wales.

Evacuated in-utero from Sussex, England after Dunkirk and I still blame Adolph Hitler and Operation Lion for my birth in Wales.

I lived from 1945 to 1965 in Haywards Heath, Sussex with my education in Brighton and Hove.

I emigrated to Australia in April 1965 due largely to a misguided testosterone surge and a spare 10 pounds sterling. After the hormones had subsided (and having been shown the door) I decided that I was having such a good time I might as well stay on anyway.

I met and married Maggie in Brisbane in 1970 and the rest is history as they say. Children: Alexei Rhys and Melina Bronwen. I am now the proud grandfather of four junior Simms.

Sporting Interests: I played soccer for 10 years and Rugby Football for 21 years, including 18 with Power House, Melbourne. I enjoy cycling and snow skiing. I have also rowed, swum, boxed, karate'd and cricketed with a conspicuous lack of success, but with a maximum of enjoyment.

Musical Influences: Early musical loves included going to concerts at Brighton's Dome to hear the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Mahalia Jackson, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Henry 'Kid' Orey and Oscar Peterson. I love Trad jazz and dancing. I have danced to Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk, Humphrey Littelton, Graham Bell and many more.

I joined Melbourne Welsh Male Choir in 1987 and consider 4 years as Treasurer and 5 years as President an honour and time well spent. I am currently enjoying serving as Vice President

Likes: I enjoy the Melbourne Theatre Company season, Choir activities, bike rides, reading biographies, the snow, Wallabies beating anybody including Wales and England and especially New Zealand. I am a Foundation member of Melbourne Rebels Rugby Club.

Work: I have been self-employed as a builder for 36 years. My present status is retired but I am highly active in advocacy for cycling infrastructure such as the Box Hill to Ringwood Shared User Path.

Ambitions: To enjoy the next 20 years or so, to the same extent as the last 78 and hope to keep my marbles, and I firmly believe the increase of Immunoglobulin created by rehearsals and especially concerts is helping.

New Member Profile

Bass - Ian Eckersley



I was born in Manchester England in 1941 and migrated to Australia in 1964. At the end of that year I joined TAA and went to work as an Administrative Officer in Lae, Papua New Guinea. I met my wife Helen within weeks of arriving in Australia. We married in 1967 and she joined me in New Guinea.

We returned to Melbourne in 1970 and moved to Mulgrave (now Wheelers Hill). After 27 years with TAA and then QANTAS I started my own courier business, which I continued until a serious car accident in 2012, which prevented me from continuing the business.

I have one daughter, Annika, who is married to David and they have twin sons, Billy and Zack.

I was involved in the church choir at my parish church in England including playing the organ for services on occasions. I have always had a great love of Welsh Male Choirs and I am delighted that, thanks to Alan Hughes' introduction, I am able to join the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir.

A woman came home, screeching her car into the driveway, and ran into the house. She slammed the door and shouted at the top of her lungs, "Honey, pack your bags. I won the lottery!"

The husband said, "Oh my God! What should I pack, beach stuff or mountain stuff?" "Doesn't matter," she said. "Just get out."



Concert with the Australian Youth Band Sunday 26th August 2018

The choir was delighted to continue its association with the Australian Youth Band as guest artists for the Band's Concert at MLC on Sunday 26th August 2018. We will also be performing with them for the Choir's joint concert with the Sydney Welsh and again in our major concert celebrating the **100th Anniversary of the World War1 Armistice** 11th November 2018 at 3:00 p.m. at the Melbourne Town Hall.

In the recent concert, the Choir performed 4 numbers, two of which were joint numbers with the AYB concert band. The concert featured performances by the AYB junior band and their 10-member drumline as well as the full senior band. The finale included a medley of songs from musical theatre and ended with the audience being invited to join in singing some of the songs from *The Sound of Music* and *Oklahoma*.

The **Australian Youth Band** is Victoria's premier youth performance ensemble, featuring a sixty piece symphonic band and a fully equipped marching band with American-style Drumline. The talented musicians range in age from 12 to 28 and come from all over Melbourne and Victoria. The band was formed in 1978 as the Moomba Band to lead the 25th Anniversary Procession of Melbourne's annual Moomba Festival, and was later also known as the McDonald's Melbourne Youth Band. Since its inception, the band has journeyed to most states of Australia to perform its unique brand of colourful and dynamic music entertainment, playing regularly at popular regional festivals, major sporting events, marching band festivals and corporate functions.

The band's performance highlights have included marching displays at AFL football finals, international cricket matches, NBL basketball, and the Spring Racing Carnival. Other high profile performances have been at Brisbane's World Expo 88, the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne Concert Hall, the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, the FINA World Swimming Championships, the Davis Cup Tennis and before Queen Elizabeth II at the Moomba Festival. The band also performed at the 2017 Morning Melodies concert series at Hamer Hall, supporting the band's patron, Rhonda Burchmore.



Concert for Cancer Ringwood Salvation Army Saturday 1st September

Another organization with whom we are always delighted to perform is our neighbour, the Ringwood Salvation Army Citadel Band. Located only a hop, skip and a jump from our rehearsal rooms in Ringwood. We love performing with this brass band on their home turf. While their stage is not designed for a choir of our size together with the band, the acoustics and the camaraderie more than make up for the somewhat constricted choir configuration. All profits from this concert go towards cancer research.



Ringwood Salvation Army Band presents their annual Concert for Cancer with THE MELBOURNE WELSH MALE CHOIR
Musical Director David Ashton-Smith

CONCERT FOR CANCER

7.30 pm
Saturday 1st September

Ringwood Salvation Army
53 Wantirna Rd Ringwood

Adults - \$20 Concession - \$15
Children U/15 Free

tickets from
<https://www.trybooking.com/WZRR> or call 98700720

On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St. Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven? When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left. The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven? After yet another month, St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven." "Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?" St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple. "OH, COME ON!", St. Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"



Tuckers' Concert in Geelong

Seniors Week 5th October at 2:30 p.m.

This is our annual engagement to sing at St Mary's Basilica, Geelong and is one of our favourite gigs. The grand old church's acoustics add a unique depth to our songs, especially the "Amens".

This will be our 15th consecutive annual performance sponsored by Tucker's and the second under the stewardship of Tucker's Director of Community Relations Alyson Burchell. We are looking forward to performing to a lot of "old audience friends" who tend to fill the church for our concert year after year.

For enquiries and tickets please contact Tuckers Funeral Services on 03 5221 4788



In the Melbourne Town Hall November 11th Concert, the choir will be performing a selection of songs from the war years as featured on our "Till the Boys Come Home" CD with that wonderful songstress **Marina Prior** singing some of the songs made famous by Vera Lyn and Gracie Fields.

In addition **Mike Brady** will reprise the number, which he wrote for the RSL "This Place Is Their Place" and performed on ANZAC day at the MCG (with some of our choir in his backing group).

Watch this space for further details of this unique event.

Welsh Choirs from two States in Concert

We seem to be making a habit of giving a concert with an interstate or overseas Choir at the Kingston Centre, Moorabbin. This time the concert on Sunday October 21st at 2:00 p.m. will feature the Sydney Welsh Choir, a mixed choir, who will be touring Victoria and this will be their final appearance here.

The choir has an unusual history and metamorphosis in that the Welsh Rugby Union tour of Australia in 1978 inspired the formation of the Sydney Welsh Rugby Club, whose teams made an immediate impact with their singing at the post-match celebrations. A male voice choir was created at the club, broadening into a mixed choir in 1980.

Margaret Hughes was Music Director from 1981 to 1999, building up the choir into a separate entity with an international reputation. The Sydney Welsh Choir now has over eighty members and has outlived its parent rugby club, which was wound up in 1997.



985 Nepean Highway next to Moorabbin station

Ticket enquiries 9556 4440

<http://www.kingstonarts.com.au/WHATS-ON>

Teacher: "If you had one dollar and you asked your father for another, how many dollars would you have?"

Vincent: "One dollar."

Teacher: "You don't know your arithmetic."

Vincent: "You don't know my father."

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Recruiting

If you would like to experience the benefits of being a chorister or just to observe the choir in full voice, pop along to our rehearsal venue at Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood. The Federation Centre, as it is called, is a \$4.4million complex, jointly funded by the Federal and State governments and the local Maroondah Council. Based at the old Ringwood Primary School site and incorporating many of the old buildings. The Centre is the choir's permanent home, which is accessible for choristers and supporters alike. With the ability to merge three of the rooms into one, it is possible for the choir to have open rehearsals and small concerts with audiences of up to a couple of hundred.

Catering facilities are also available on the premises so we are able to invite our friends to hear the choir and share a cup of tea and light refreshments with us afterwards. The choir moved into the complex in April 2001 and has established a good working relationship with the management of the Centre since.

We are always looking for new choir members and if you think you would like to audition or just sit in, please give our secretary Kevin Seerup a call or just turn up. In addition to the camaraderie, joy and fulfilment we get from making great harmony together, we have a touring schedule which takes us around Victoria and occasionally interstate with some overseas trips - when invitations, choir finances and the state of the Aussie dollar allow!

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday evening (excepting some school holidays) and run from 7:00 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. when the choir is updated by the President and Secretary about upcoming events and related choir matters.

We especially welcome younger members, but prospective choristers of any age are urged to come along to listen, participate in a rehearsal session and possibly audition to join the choir. If you are interested in coming along, please give Kevin Seerup (0407 328 763) or any choir member, a call and we will introduce you to an irreverent but highly motivated group of guys who love singing in 4-part harmony and enjoy each others company.

Would you like to hire the choir?

While the choir is a not for profit organisation, in order to maintain our professional image and pay for our music professionals, rehearsal facilities and other choir services we need to generate revenue. If you or your company are interested in promoting your image, rewarding your clients or staff or celebrating a significant occasion then we may well be the answer to your requirements. We have performed at conference dinners, opening ceremonies, Board luncheons, weddings and sporting events and of course (as you would have seen from this newsletter) car

showrooms.

For a negotiated fee we can provide entertainment with a number of appropriate songs or we can provide a complete 2-hour concert, with guest artists of the calibre of our Singer of the Year finalists, if required. We have a large repertoire of songs ranging from opera choruses and songs from musical theatre to pop and folk music. We come as the complete package with electronic keyboard (if necessary) and choir risers. Our music professionals can assist with the staging and content of the performance and we can also help with marketing and promotion if necessary. Give us a call and we will be pleased to tailor a performance to your individual needs.

Would you like to sponsor the choir?

The choir is actively seeking sponsors, in particular for of our major events including the prestigious Singer of the Year competition and concert.

If you would like to be associated with this concert, or simply wish to have your name or product associated with the choir in concerts, programs or website etc., please contact Colin Brown (0409 188 109) or 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 a registered charity. so if you would like to make a donation to assist in keeping the soul of Welsh choral singing alive and well in Melbourne then please do so by contacting the choir secretary. All donations are tax deductible.

Would you like to be part of our supporter database?

If you have any friends or family who may be interested in having a copy of this newsletter please feel free to email a copy to them or alternatively give us their email address and we will send them a copy direct and ensure they continue to receive a copy whenever we produce the next version.

We do not make our database available to anyone and the only thing we promote is membership of the choir and our upcoming concerts. In the unlikely event that you don't like our content, you can unsubscribe at any time.

A doctor and a lawyer are talking at a party. Their conversation is constantly interrupted by people describing their ailments and asking the doctor for free medical advice. After an hour of this, the exasperated doctor asks the lawyer, "What do you do to stop people from asking you for legal advice when you're out of the office?"

"I give it to them," replies the lawyer, "and then I send them a bill." The doctor is shocked, but agrees to give it a try. The next day, still feeling slightly guilty, the doctor prepares the bills. When he goes to place them in his mailbox, he finds a bill from the lawyer.