

## St David's Day Celebrations

### MWMC Concert at MLC, Kew

On the evening of 2nd March the audience at MLC's James Tatoulis Auditorium, who had braved the heat and the public transport disruptions, were treated to a veritable feast of Welsh and contemporary music. From the stirring opening bars of Llanfair to the finale with the choir and soloists combining to sing You'll never walk alone, the applause said it all. Our guest artist Andrew Jenkins demonstrated why he deserved the Blue Riband he won at the 2018 Welsh National Eisteddfod with his sensitive yet powerful interpretation of the aria from Faust Avant de Quitter ces lieux followed by the patriotic Cymru Fach and the evocative My little Welsh home.

Not to be outdone, our guest soprano Chloe Harris sang Ivor Novello's beautiful Waltz of my heart, and then joined with the choir to sing a novel version of Ar hyd y Nos singing the first verse alone (in English) then combining with the choir who sang the remaining verses in Welsh.

The second half's combination of Welsh favourites like Rachie and Myfanwy together with a bracket of songs from Les Miserables and Carousel provided a perfect vehicle to showcase the talents of the soloists and the choir.

### Gymanfa Ganu, St Michaels Church

The traditional celebration of community singing organised by the Welsh church and held at St Michael's Church in Collins Street, Melbourne (because the Welsh Church can only hold 150 people) continues to gather strength.

Despite the vagaries of the weather (with outside temperatures in the high 30s, the choirs seated in the balcony were allowed to dispense with jackets and ties) and the loss of the original overseas conductor (due to illness), the audience were treated to, what many said, was one of the best Gymanfas they had attended.

The conducting duties were shared by Jeanette John (MD of the Geelong Welsh Ladies Choir) and Tom Buchanan (MD of the Australian Welsh plus two of the other choirs) with Sion Gough-Hughes acting as compere and providing the pastoral duties. With Huw Jones improvising on the harp and Andrew Jenkins as soloist plus members of six choirs in the balcony together with organ, timpani and trumpets, the audience was treated to a highly enjoyable afternoon of Welsh music and culture.



## "An uplifting afternoon of Music"

Bendigo Cathedral - 2:00 p.m. Sunday 24th March

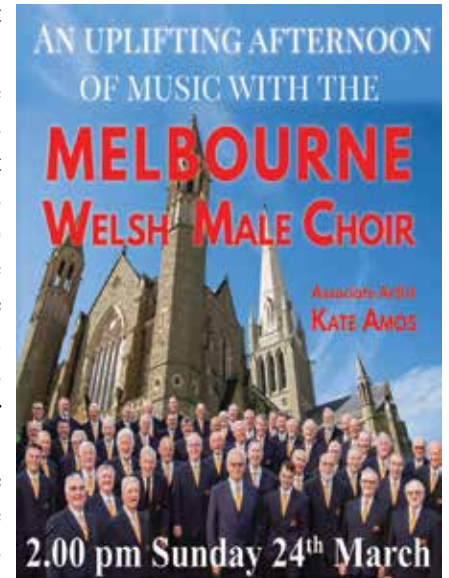
The choir visited Bendigo's wonderful Sacred Heart Cathedral, in MacKenzie Street, for a Sunday afternoon concert, which I'm sure raised the cathedral's roof (possibly the tallest in the country).

The wonderful Kate Amos, who was one of our guest artists (the other was Teddy Tahu Rhodes) when we sang at the Ulumbarra Theatre in Bendigo last year, performed with us and delighted our audience once again. Kate's performance credits include Victorian Opera's Noye's Fludde and

Snowqueen, La Traviata, Hansel & Gretel and leading roles in Gilbert and Sullivan Opera's The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, and Lyric Opera's The Red Apple. Kate recently played Christine in Windmill Theatre Company's The Phantom of the Opera, receiving a Lyrebird Award.

Her numerous awards include: AME 'Opera Scholar of the Year', E & L Jullyan Academic Excellence scholarship and Sleath Lowrey scholarship.

Kate studied at the Fondazione Spontini Pergolesi in Italy after winning a scholarship through the Italian Acclaim Awards and recently was a Finalist in the IFAC Australian Singing Competition winning the Symphony Australia Prize, Merenda scholarship and UK Royal-Overseas League Award.



*In life it's important to know when to stop arguing with people - and simply let them be wrong.*

## Upcoming Concerts

### Bunjil Place, Narre Warren – “The World in Union”

Joint Concert with Frankston Ladies Choir  
3:00 p.m. Saturday 13th April

We will be joining Frankston Ladies Choir (FLC) once again for a concert at Melbourne’s newest Performing Arts Centre in the City of Casey.



Simon Walters, the choir’s accompanist, is also the Music Director of the Frankston Ladies Choir (FLC), and as a result you can be assured that the joint numbers will be well rehearsed and integrated. The rest of the program will reflect the different individual interpretations and abilities of both choirs, so it should appeal to the whole community.

We have not performed at Bunjil Place before but we understand a lot of attention has been given to making this 800 seat venue an excellent place to sing and listen as well as being an easy place to get to and park. It promises to be a great afternoon’s entertainment, so make sure you put it in your diary.

Tickets for this concert are \$48.00 Adult or \$42.00 concession and are available from <https://melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets/> or Phone 03 9709 9700

### Melbourne Recital Centre

Cnr Southbank Boulevard and Sturt St, Southbank  
“Concert with Silvie Paladino and Roy Best”  
2:00 p.m. Saturday 22nd June 2019

For what is now becoming the choir’s regular annual appearance at the Recital Centre we are delighted to have the lovely Silvie Paladino as a guest artist. This will be the first time that the choir has worked with Silvie and we are really excited to have the opportunity to sing with such a darling of the stage and musical theatre.

As many will know, Silvie has had an incredible journey since 1989, when she was offered the role of Eponine in Les Misérables as an eighteen-year-old. She has subsequently enjoyed success on the London stage and as the lead in a number of Australian productions such as Hair, Cats, Miss Saigon, Sideshow Alley, The King and I, and Jerry’s Girls. Silvie’s concert performances include lead artist roles

with the Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmania and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Australian Philharmonic Orchestra and the State Orchestra of Victoria. She has toured with Bangkok Symphony Orchestra in a series of concerts in Thailand

She is, of course a firm favourite with all audiences and viewers of Channel 9’s Carols by Candlelight, Christmas Eve concert.

We will outline more of Silvie’s career in our next newsletter, closer to the event.

Our other guest soloist for this performance is tenor Roy

Best, with whom the choir has performed a number of times and is a firm favourite with choir and audiences alike. Roy is hailed as one of Australia’s most loved and dynamic tenors. He established his singing career in spectacular fashion after successfully competing in ABC television’s Operatunity Oz.

He performed the role of the Duke in Opera Australia’s Rigoletto at the Sydney Opera House and was rewarded with a standing ovation from a packed house and a television audience of over one million viewers.

After studying voice for several years in Melbourne, Roy completed an Associate Diploma in Music through the Australian Music Examinations Board. He now delights audiences with his varied repertoire and captivating stage presence.

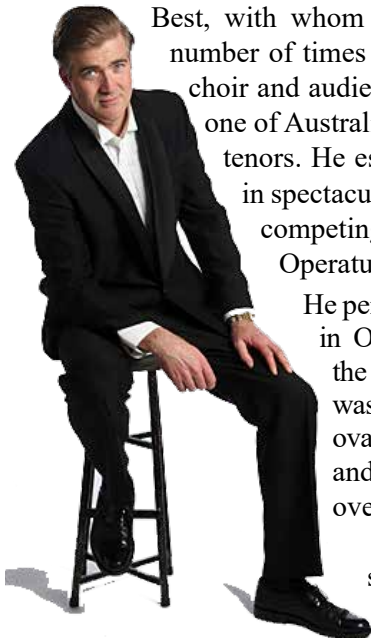
Tickets for this concert are:

- A Reserve \$70.00 (\$65.00 concession)
- B Reserve \$60.00 (\$55.00 concession)
- C Reserve \$45.00 (\$40.00 concession)

and available from

<https://melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets/>  
or Phone 03 9699 2228

*A lawyer named Strange died, and his friend asked the tombstone maker to inscribe on his tombstone, “Here lies Strange, an honest man, and a lawyer.” The inscriber insisted that such an inscription would be confusing, for passers-by who would tend to think that three men were buried under the stone. However he suggested an alternative: He would inscribe, “Here lies a man who was both honest and a lawyer. That way, whenever anyone walked by the tombstone and read it, they would be certain to remark: “That’s Strange!”*





Asked to provide a profile for the newsletter, our two candidates produced strikingly different versions which illustrate the delicious diversity of our choir.

### Choir Chorister Profile Kurt Ambrose, First Tenor

Dear Reader,

I do not recognise the entrances to your grandest buildings, so accustomed am I to the one marked "Stage Door". The neatly pressed sameness of my costume has been slid into carparks in Toolangi, in cathedral vestries from Geelong to Vienna, and on the marbled balconies of The Albert Hall. I speak to you using the works of others, trying to chime but one note in accord, with a voice in hundreds for an instrument, and a baton for a staff.



This is the work wrought by a choir, a work of anonymity and humility, of patience and magnanimity, of modesty and self-effacement. That long after the song is sung, this is what lives within its heart.

And yet, I have sung with operatic royalty, defined the tenderest of moments, heard the finest voices and sung monumental pieces in esteemed palaces. I have vibrated the acoustic of basilicas, cathedrals, concert halls and weather-beaten erections in the middle of country fields. I have seen lines around town halls in little Welsh streets, and seen those same crowds in raptures out of their seats.

So yes, unknown and unmourned, but:  
...I also had my hour

One far fierce hour and sweet:

There was a shout about my ears

And palms before my feet.

*(With apologies to G.K. Chesterton.)*

Kurt Ambrose sings with the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir, as a First Tenor. He joined the choir after meeting it online in 2007. He has impatiently endured interminable sound checks, and as a reward been the beneficiary of incredible moments, made possible by a group of men dedicated to creating a sound. He works at La Trobe University to support this habit.

*Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting. Well, for example, the other day the wife and I went into town and went into a shop. We were only in there for about 5 minutes. When we came out, there was a policeman writing out a parking ticket. We went up to him and I said, "Come on man, how about giving a senior citizen a break?" He ignored us and continued writing the ticket. I called him a dimwit. He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tyres. So Mary called him a knucklehead. He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket. This went on for about 20 minutes. The more we abused him, the more tickets he wrote. Just then our bus arrived. We try to have a little fun each day now that we're retired. It's important at our age.*

### New Choir member – Bernie Padget, Baritone

Some of our readers may recall that the choir performed at the Hamer Hall, in December 2004, with the "singing cobbler" Peter Brocklehurst. Well now we have our very own version!



Bernie Padget, lives in Wantirna. He is married to the joy of his life, a local Victorian girl named Joy! They have a daughter, Abby.

He has always been a travelling man in one form or another. He has worked as a shoe repairer since 1973 and prior to that he was a postman in both Victoria and NSW and before that he was a bus driver. He is now retired. Bernie was actually born in England and lived in Redcar in North Yorkshire before moving to South Wales in 1958 due to his Dad's work. Then in 1969 he emigrated to Australia as a "£10 Pom" with a good mate from South Wales.

As a lad while still living in Ebbw Vale, which was in Monmouthshire (a county in south-east Wales and is now in Gwent), he and a couple of mates joined the local Church choir. But apart from that he has no musical "history" or skills, but an obvious love of music.

Bernie heard of the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir from Len Powell, who was a member many years ago, and he told him to have a chat with one of our tenors - Phil Tomlinson. Phil suggested he attend our recent concert "Till they all come home", at the Melbourne Town Hall, in November, to see the choir in action. Bernie liked what he heard and saw and came along to a rehearsal at Ringwood and the rest, as they say, is history.

Bernie, welcome to the Melbourne Welsh, and especially to the Baritone section.

### Communication

We depend on the revenue from our concerts and plus the sales of CD for the majority of our income, so your patronage is essential to our survival and growth. Please feel free to copy or circulate this newsletter to any of your friends and if you would like us to add them to our distribution list, so they get the copy direct, then let us know their email address.

Email is our preferred way of communication with our supporters so, if you've recently joined the internet fraternity, send us an email and we'll add you into our database and include you in all future communications.

Feed-back is very important to us, so write and let us know what you think of our performances, introduce us to your friends and tell us what you would like us to perform at forthcoming events.



### Would you like to join the choir?

Do you like singing? Do you enjoy socialising with others who share your passion and enjoy the fun of joining with like-minded men to create a beautiful sound. If you do, we can help!. We are on the lookout for new members, whether experienced choristers wanting a new challenge or inexperienced singers of any age, who would benefit from the coaching and direction of our professional music team (which we believe to be the best in the business) and the mentoring of our established choristers. Our web-based learning aids enable newcomers and established choristers to come up to speed with repertoire material very quickly.

Whatever your level of musical competence, you will experience a sympathetic conductor and accompanist, a great rehearsal environment and a group of friendly, dedicated and talented choristers. Many of our members have had no formal musical training, but they work hard, enjoy what they do and are keen to help the choir achieve new heights.

If you simply want to see and hear the choir rehearsing, please come along to our rehearsal venue in Ringwood. Visitors are always welcome and if you come on the first Wednesday in the month we'll even offer you a sandwich or a cake. You'll appreciate how a four-part, male voice arrangement is developed to the polished state you see on stage. Having an audience tends to keep our choristers in check, without inhibiting the fun and banter, which is part of every rehearsal!

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday (excepting school holidays) and run from 7:00 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. when the choir is updated by the choir president about upcoming choir events and related matters. We especially welcome younger members, although potential members of any age are always encouraged to come for an audition.

If you are interested give Gwyn Harper (0419 562 353), or any choir member, a call and we will be pleased to introduce you to an irreverent but highly motivated group of guys who love the company of their fellow choristers and enjoy the challenge of singing in 4-part harmony.

### Would you like to sponsor the choir?

The choir is actively seeking sponsors in particular for the annual funding of our famous Singer of the Year Concert.

This prestigious event, which is open to singers under the age of 35, draws competitors from all parts of the state (and indeed sometimes interstate)

The number of winners and runners-up of this competition who have gone on to make careers on concert and opera stages worldwide is testament to the significance of the event. In addition to awarding monetary prizes to the finalists, the choir provides opportunities for them to perform as guest artists in our concerts during the year.

All sponsors are acknowledged in our programs and publicity material and there would also be the opportunity to be involved in the presentation ceremony on the night and during the elimination heats.

If you would like to be associated with this wonderful event or simply wish to have your name or product associated with the choir, please contact any member of the choir's committee and we will be delighted to work with you to get the best value out of your sponsorship.

### Would you like to hire the choir?

As can be seen by anyone who attended our major concerts at the Melbourne Recital Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo and the Melbourne Town Hall, the choir has the skills, capability and contacts to produce and run high quality major events.

In addition, the choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc.,

So if you require anything from a short rousing opening for a conference (say) to a full two-hour concert, with guest artists (if required), please contact Colin Brown (0409 188 109), or any committee member to discuss your needs. Please bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of up to 60 voices plus a professional accompanist and music director, so we provide great value for money.

*Little Tim was in the garden filling in a hole when his neighbour peered over the fence. Interested in what the cheeky-faced youngster was up to, he politely asked, "What are you doing, Tim?" "My goldfish died," replied the boy tearfully, without looking up. "And I've just buried him." The neighbour was concerned. "That's an awfully big hole for a goldfish, isn't it?" Tim patted down the last heap of earth then replied, "That's because he's inside your cat."*

### Contacts

- Marketing - Gwyn Harper and Colin Brown .....[marketing@melbournewelshchoir.com.au](mailto:marketing@melbournewelshchoir.com.au)
- President - David Field.....[president@melbournewelshchoir.com.au](mailto:president@melbournewelshchoir.com.au)
- Secretary -Kevin Seerup .....[secretary@melbournewelshchoir.com.au](mailto:secretary@melbournewelshchoir.com.au)
- Vice President - David Simm .....[vicepresident@melbournewelshchoir.com.au](mailto:vicepresident@melbournewelshchoir.com.au)
- Phil Tomlinson, Paul Gawthorn, David Phillips, Ieuan Thomas, Doug Utley ....[committee@melbournewelshchoir.com.au](mailto:committee@melbournewelshchoir.com.au)

*Contributions welcomed from supporters. 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 included in the publication 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. Editor: Gwyn Harper 0419 562 353 Design and layout Alan Stevenson*