

MWMC With Silvie Paladino and Roy Best Melbourne Recital Centre 22nd June

As the final notes of **You'll Never Walk Alone** sung by Silvie, Roy and the choir faded, the audience gave the whole team a standing ovation after what many said later was the choir's best concert ever at the Recital Centre.

The program kicked off in thrilling fashion with a medley from **Man of la Mancha** (*featuring a new second verse ... hear me heathens and villains and serpents of sin.. which we have included following our concert with AYB*). This was followed by **Sing Rhondda**, which coincidentally also includes a second, chorister-written verse, not in the original Eleanor Purdy version

Roy Best's initial bracket featured two songs made famous by Mario Lanza, **Be My Love** and **I'll Walk With God** which also featured the choir providing 4-part harmonies.

Silvie started with the evocative **Something Wonderful** from *The King and I*.

She then introduced her next piece by stating that she sang this particular song eight times a week for two years but it has remained one of her favourites – **I Dreamed A Dream** from *Les Miserables*. The applause from the audience at the end of the song showed that she had not lost any of her artistry.

To complete her bracket Silvie joined with the choir to sing Leonard Cohen's **Hallelujah**.

The choir's next numbers were very different as MC, Bill Spawton, explained.

I Believe was commissioned and introduced by Jane Froman on her television show, and became the first hit song ever introduced on TV. Froman, troubled by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1952 so soon after World War II, asked Drake, Graham, Shirl and Stillman to compose a song that would offer hope and faith to the populace (Frankie Laine's version is probably the one best remembered by our generation).

In complete contrast the choir's **Ysbryd y Nos** (*Spirit of the Night*) is a four part harmony version of a modern Welsh folk song written by Edward H Dafis, whose solo version made it to the top of the Welsh Music charts, relatively recently.

Roy Best returned to sing **Girls Were Made To Love And Kiss**, which was beautifully suited to his lyrical tenor voice.

In the last bracket of the first half, the choir sang a song, which is new to the repertoire this year, a complex but beautiful arrangement of **The Water Is Wide**. Completing the first half in rousing fashion, the choir gave full voice to Mansel Thomas' arrangement of **Deus Salutis** with its four great Amens at the end.

After the interval, the choir's rendition of the spiritual **Every Time I Feel The Spirit** got everyone's feet tapping, before a change of mood and pace with Silvie and the Choir combining to perform a beautiful arrangement by David Ashton-Smith of another spiritual **Wade In The Water**, often associated with the late Eva Cassidy.

Silvie then sang John Lennon's **Imagine**, before being joined by the choir to sing **You Raise Me Up** with a haunting additional accompaniment on the recorder by Claire Little.

Homeward Bound was another song new to our repertoire and the choir's performance brought deserved applause from the audience.

Roy returned to demonstrate his operatic ability with Rossini's tongue twisting **La Danza**, which Silvie followed with **Grande, Grande, Grande**.

Not to be outdone, the choir demonstrated their command of Italian, while our accompanist Simon showed his talent on the keyboard with Joy Amman Davis' arrangement of Ennio Morricone's haunting melody from the film *The Mission* - **Nella Fantasia**.

The final duet with Sylvie and Roy sung in Italian and English was Carol Bayer Sager's **The Prayer**.

The choir's final bracket included possibly the best known

song in Wales, taught from primary school **Calon Lan**, and a fitting closing song **My Wish For You** by the choir's patron Alwyn Humphreys.

You'll Never Walk Alone brought everyone on stage and provided a wonderful climax to a memorable concert.





Upcoming concert

Singer of the Year Final - 7.30 pm Saturday 3 August, at James Tatoulis Auditorium, MLC Barker's Road, Kew. We are offering Friends of the Choir 10% discount on tickets using the promotion code "FRIENDS19".

Our annual **Singer of the Year (SOTY)** concert features the best young talent in Victoria.

The three finalists compete as part of the choir's concert with the winner being awarded a prize of \$5,000 and the other two finalists receiving \$1,000 each.

The elimination heats, which are open to the public, are held at the Choir's rehearsal facility at Federation Estate, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood on Thursday evening 25th July at 7 pm, and on Saturday evening 27th July at 7 p.m. These heats offer possibly the best free entertainment available in Melbourne on those evenings.

The rehearsal rooms can comfortably accommodate a hundred or more people so come along and support these talented young singers. Singers who may wish to enter this competition should contact our secretary or the Choir's SOTY event manager - Alan Stevenson (0403 271 468) or via email (astevo3@gmail.com) and we will arrange for the necessary details and entrance forms to be sent to you. The competition is professionally adjudicated and every competitor receives a written evaluation of his or her performance.



Melbourne Welsh Male Choir
under the direction of
David Ashton-Smith O.A.M.

With 3 Finalists from MWMC
Singer of the Year Competition 2019

Special Guest Appearance
an Instrumental Ensemble from the
Australian Youth Band

Singer of the Year Final Concert

7.30 pm Saturday 3rd August

The James Tatoulis Auditorium - MLC
207 Barkers Road, Kew

Tickets

Adult \$35 Concession \$32

Group (6 or more) \$30

Children (under 15) \$15

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au/tickets
Ph: 9800 3889

Choir Chorister Profile - Alan Stevenson - Bass



My brother and I were born in Northern Ireland, but moved to England when I was two, where my sister was born in York. Our mother was Welsh, from a family of gamekeepers in Oswestry.

We came to Australia when I was eight, on the New Australia nominated by a farming couple in Sheffield, Tasmania. My father bought a 100 acre very rough farm (no fences, milking around 20 cows, what little paddock areas there were surrounded by fallen trees as fences), 3 miles out of Wilmot on the Cradle Mountain Road (the only road at that time to Cradle Mountain).

The farm couldn't support a growing family, so my father took a job in Ulverstone, about 25 miles away on the coast, as manager of the newly set up Egg Marketing Board, boarding in Ulverstone during the week and coming home at weekends using the Egg Board truck. That continued for many years, with my mother basically running the farm single handed, and trapping rabbits to boost income.

My brother and I were the first to go to high school from Wilmot Area School, and boarded with our father in Ulverstone, travelling by bus to Devonport High School each day, a distance of 12 miles, returning home at weekends

My mother played the piano, and I had started to learn piano in Banbury before leaving England. We had no piano on the farm at Wilmot, and I didn't get to continue piano lessons until I went to high school. My parents bought 100 day-old chicks as a fundraising effort to buy a piano. Some years later we had 3,000 laying hens (now a poultry farm) and still no piano! Our weekends were spent hand-cleaning eggs. We did eventually buy a small, wood-framed piano from a neighbour, carting it home on the back of a truck. Being out in the bush it was never tuned in the years I was at home.

At high school I was good at English but hopeless at Maths and Science, and in third year I did Touch Typing, which I loved (long before electric typewriters were invented). I was able to do music as an outside subject. In my final years at high school I was the school pianist, playing hymns at all morning assemblies.

After leaving school I came to Melbourne on my own at age 18 in the hope of studying music. I worked in Collins Book Store in Swanston Street for about a year, before getting a job as clerk in Marketing at Massey Ferguson in Sunshine. I started piano lessons with a teacher at Melbourne Conservatorium. My parents paid the deposit on a 5 ft grand piano as my 21st birthday present.

After getting married in 1963 I bought a house in South Blackburn and travelled to Sunshine each day by train. I resigned from Massey Ferguson after 10 years and taught piano privately from 7am to 8.30am, 3.30pm to 9.30 pm each day, and of course all-day Saturday and Sunday – for 3 years.

I did a 4-year Associate Diploma of Music at Melba



Conservatorium changing my major from piano to singing in my second year. In my final year I got a job teaching classroom music at Immaculate Heart College for boys in Preston, forming two choirs, and playing for school Masses (a high learning curve for a non-catholic) for the next 3 years.

I was Music Director of the Southern Cross Boy's Choir (after it changed its name from Metropolitan Boy's Choir) for 9 years, running annual music camps, and touring to Adelaide and Swan Hill. Lucas de Jong and Roy Best were choristers until their voices broke.

I was appointed as the first Music Coordinator at Emmaus College in Forest Hills in 1979, building up a very strong Instrumental Teaching program, and formed an orchestra from available instruments which toured feeder primary schools on a regular basis.

After 7 years at Emmaus I divorced, bought a 1-acre garden and house in Ferny Creek, and got the job of Music Coordinator at Mater Christi College in Belgrave. I spent 11 years at Mater Christi, during which I completed a Diploma of Education (Secondary) at ACU. In my final year at Mater Christi I enrolled in a 1-year course of Certificate 4 Information Technology – Software Applications at Swinburne TAFE in Croydon. Up to this time I had no experience on a computer, and certainly didn't own one. Following this I resigned from Mater Christi and made a career change teaching classes and short-courses in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access Database and Touch Typing at all Swinburne campuses – Croydon, Wantirna, Hawthorn, Prahran, Lilydale and Healesville.

I did a course of Certificate III Desktop Publishing at Wantirna campus in 1997 which led to teaching a short course at Holmesglen, and then lecturing in Desktop Publishing at Central Queensland University, Melbourne Campus in Lonsdale Street for several years.

I was assistant musical director with the Australia Welsh Male Choir for a number of years, and sang with them in the Royal Albert Hall. I joined the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir in January 1988. I set up our music library in 1995 and maintained it for several years; Vice President 1997 to 1999; CD person from 1998 to 2001; editor of internal and external newsletter for a number of years; maintained the website from 2000 for several years; choir marshall for 6 years; responsible for concert logistics from 1998 to 2017; organised the Tasmanian and Canada tours; and have organised SOTY since 2000. I was deputy conductor for a number of years and second accompanist (I'm on our Heritage CD playing the duet accompaniment of Rhythm of Life).

I was on the committee for 26 consecutive years from 1992 maintaining the attendance list for most of those years, and Secretary for 18 years. I designed and created my first programme in 1998 and have continued to create our programmes for 22 years. I have also designed most of our promotion material. I was made a Life Member in 2015.

I have been president of Belgrave Probus 3 times, still do their monthly newsletter, and am a Life Member. I was secretary and one of 3 steering committee members working with council over 8 years to build the new 3.5 million dollar Upwey Tecoma Recreation and Sporting Hub in Upwey.

I joined the Maroondah Bushwalking Club in 2015, almost immediately becoming editor of their Footnotes newsletter of around 30 pages each month. Despite not being a great walker, I became Vice President in 2017, and am currently in my second year as President of a club of 500+ members.

I have a son and two daughters, and 8 grandchildren - two boys and six girls. The eldest is 23 and the youngest 8. My wife Nancy and I have now lived in Ferny Creek for 33 years. Over the last two years I have enjoyed my break from choir management, concentrating on graphic work and writing our repertoire into Sibelius and creating rehearsal sound files.

Communication

The choir is quite an expensive organization to run and we receive no government assistance. As a result we depend primarily on ticket sales to our concerts for most 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 or relatives 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 or they can complete the information on our website.

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

Feedback is very important to us. 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 sponsor the choir?

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

The Choir's Welsh Music

Last month in order to give our patrons some background to Welsh music culture we introduced you to one of the composers whose music we perform Joseph Parry.

Joseph Parry (21 May 1841 – 17 February 1903) was a Welsh composer and musician. Born in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, he is best known as the composer of “Myfanwy” and the hymn tune “Aberystwyth”, Parry was also the first Welshman to compose an opera; his composition, *Blodwen*, was the first opera in the Welsh language.



Parry had seen operas in London and in Philadelphia and enjoyed them. He decided that the people of Wales should have an opera of their own, in Welsh.

Opera in Wales was very much of a rarity at that time. English touring companies made occasional visits to Llandudno and Swansea but otherwise it was unknown. Very few people in Wales – and possibly no one in Aberystwyth except Parry – had ever seen an opera. Indeed, most people had no idea what to expect at an opera.

Blodwen is set in Wales at the beginning of the 15th century. Its plot is improbable and historically wildly inaccurate; there are serious weaknesses in its dramatic structure; and the music is derivative. Such weaknesses, however, do not necessarily prevent an opera from being successful. There was a growing cultural nationalism in Wales at the time and a grand opera, full of good tunes, in Welsh and based on Welsh history, was just what Wales wanted. *Blodwen* proved an outstanding success and had notched up around 500 performances by the time Parry died in 1903.

Shortly after completing *Blodwen*, Parry decided to sit for a doctorate in Music. The requirements for being awarded a doctorate in music from Cambridge were similar to those for the Mus.Bac. he had obtained in 1871, that is, registering with the University, sitting an examination, and composing a substantial work – usually a sacred cantata – for voices and orchestra. But unlike the Mus.Bac. Degree, the doctoral composition – the cantata *Jerusalem* in Parry's case (nothing to do with Hubert Parry's *Jerusalem*, of course) – also had to be performed.

Despite the expense, Parry decided to take *Blodwen* as well as *Jerusalem* on tour through Wales and England including Cambridge for the doctoral performance. Twenty students from Aberystwyth as well as ‘The Welsh Representative Choir’ from South Wales took part in the tour. Its high points were the performance of *Jerusalem* in King's College

Chapel in Cambridge and the performance two days later of *Jerusalem* and *Blodwen* at the Alexandra Palace in London.

The *Western Mail* carried a very full report of the Cambridge performance and the degree ceremony that followed it. The tour was a musical success but a financial loss for Joseph Parry, costing £800 to stage but with takings amounting to only a little over £550, although the members of the choir subsequently raised another £100 from a benefit concert.

Parry was immensely – perhaps excessively – proud of his Cambridge doctorate of music but we must acknowledge that it was no mean achievement for the son of an illiterate Welsh steelworker.

And the experience of conducting his own cantata in the magnificent surroundings of King's College Chapel before such luminaries as Sir George Macfarren and Oscar Browning must have been mind-blowing.

Would you like to hire the choir?

Anyone who attended our concerts at major venues such as the Melbourne Recital Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo and the Melbourne Town Hall, would be aware that 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.

Upcoming Concert

Arden Crescent Concert Series
Uniting Church, 21 Arden Crescent, Rosanna
Sunday 8 September at 2:00 pm

From the splendour of the Melbourne Recital Centre to this small Uniting Church in Rosanna, the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir is happy to perform wherever we have an audience. That so many established musicians are attracted to this small church for the Concert series is a credit to the organisers.

While this will be our first appearance at Arden Street, our guest artist the lovely Kate Amos, has wowed audiences here in the past. We look forward to raising the roof or at least delighting the patrons.



Other events

On Wednesday morning 3rd July, the Choir performed at the formal opening by the Governor of Victoria, Hon. Linda Dessau AC of the new MECWA care facility in Caulfield, which also coincided with the 60th anniversary of MECWA

The Choir opened the proceeding with **Sing Rhondda**, followed by **You Raise Me Up**. At the conclusion of the speeches the choir sang **New York, New York**.

The Governor thanked the choir for it's performance and looked forward to seeing us at Government House, an invitation we hope to accept.

Laughter is the best medicine

While singing in the choir is a wonderful way to maintain physical and mental health, laughter is still the best medicine. Here's a joke or two to keep you going.

Flying Fun

Jones the farmer and his son Berwyn sign up for a sight-seeing tour in a small aircraft. As always, Jones angles for the best deal possible.

"Very well, Mr Jones," says the pilot. "If you can go through the entire flight without making a sound, you and Berwyn can have your tickets for free."

So the plane takes off and the pilot makes sure it's a rough one, launching almost straight up, flying under the Severn Bridge, using every single bit of acrobatics in his repertoire and doing a loop at the end. Jones says nothing.

After they land, the pilot turns to Jones in disbelief.

"Mr Jones, I've been doing this for 20 years and no-one's ever been able to hold back from screaming. Tell me, was there ever a point in the flight where you wanted to say something?"

"Aye," Jones replies. "When Berwyn fell out."

Bowling Balls

A little old man boards a bus with a bowling ball in each of his front pockets. He sits down next to a beautiful young blonde lady, and she can't help but glance quizzically at the man and his bulging pockets. It's an uneasy few

minutes before, finally, the little old man can take no more. "Bowling balls," he nods reassuringly.

The blonde seems a little shocked, and stares on.

Moments later, she says: "Does it hurt as much as tennis elbow?"

A Young Law Student

A young Law student, having failed his Law exam, goes to his crusty old professor, who is renowned for his sharp legal mind.

Student: "Sir, do you really understand everything about this subject?"

Professor: "Actually, I probably do. Otherwise I wouldn't be a professor, would I?"

Student: "OK. So I'd like to ask you a question. If you can give me the correct answer, I will accept my marks as is. If you can't give me the correct answer, however, you'll have to give me an "A".

Professor: "Hmmm, alright. So what's the question?"

Student: "What is legal but not logical, logical but not legal, and neither logical nor legal?"

The professor wracks his famous brain, but just can't crack the answer. Finally he gives up and changes the student's failing mark into an "A", as agreed, and the student goes away well pleased.

The professor continues to wrack his brain over the question all afternoon, but still can't get the answer. So finally he calls in a group of his brightest students and tells them he has a really, really tough question to answer: "What is legal but not logical, logical but not legal, and neither logical nor legal?"

To the professor's surprise (and embarrassment), all the students immediately raise their hands.

"All right" says the professor and asks his favourite student to answer.

"It's quite easy, sir" says the student "You see, you are 75 years old and married to a 30 year old woman, which is legal, but not logical. Your wife has a 22 year old lover, which is logical, but not legal. And your wife's lover failed his law exam but you've just given him an "A", which is neither legal, nor logical."

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