

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

Newsletter No 82 July 2024



Camperdown Capers

The choir had a great weekend in Camperdown for the Robert Burns Celtic Festival.

Fine weather, hospitable people, good companions and a large appreciative audience, made the 200+km trek from Melbourne all worthwhile.

Because of the popularity of the festival, accommodation was at a premium in Camperdown, and as a result the choir was split over three locations Camperdown, Cobden and Colac. Nonetheless we managed to get together in groups for dinner on the Saturday night and shared stories, sang songs and generally had a good bonding session.

Sunday, after viewing the open-air market, it was down to business installing the choir's risers and rehearsing and fine tuning the new songs which we would be singing for the first time in concert.

The stage was narrow and our music director was perilously close to its edge but in the end, everything worked out well.



The Choir on stage at the Theatre Royal Camperdown

Preceded by a Scottish pipe band, and followed by a Scottish fiddle group we were the main act of the Festival's finalé and provided a balanced program containing Irish, Cornish, Scottish, English and Welsh ballads to satisfy all the British expatriates and everyone else in the audience.

The audience' applause reflected their enjoyment our performance.

We look forward to being invited back to Camperdown for future festivals.

Our film chosen for Festival

Some of our MWMC choir members are set to become film stars as well as stage celebrities with their recent documentary (which was filmed over several weeks at our rehearsal venue at Federation Estate as well as the Tamale studios), being selected as one of the films to be shown in upcoming documentary film festival, the press release for which is given below: -

Melbourne Documentary Film Festival to screen ‘Canwn: Let’s Sing’

*The Melbourne Documentary Film Festival, which starts online on July 1st, 2024, and at the Nova Cinema on 17th July 2024, will screen an inspiring documentary about the **Melbourne Welsh Male Choir**.*



*The documentary, ‘**Canwn: Let’s Sing**’, showcases the history and beautiful sounds of one of Australia’s leading male choirs, and features interviews with several of its members.*

*The documentary was made by Tom and Michael Brandon and directed and edited by Cohen Medson through Tom’s company, **Tamale Studios**. Michael sings in the choir.*

*“We are thrilled that our story will screen at the festival”, said **Kevin Seerup, Choir President**.*

“It showcases the beautiful music we have shared with audiences in Melbourne as well as the UK, South Africa, Europe, USA and Canada.

The documentary also highlights the enormous benefits that group singing provides to our members, through a supportive social network and better physical and mental health.

Our members range in age from 40 to 91. We are still going strong after 40 years of singing, even through the challenges of Covid-19, when we had to rehearse online for many months.”

*‘**Canwn: Let’s Sing**’ will screen on **July 28th**. A link to a **trailer** is given below:*

<https://youtu.be/7hkvCISYAKs>

Upcoming Choir Concerts and performances:

Dinner at the MCG to welcome the Welsh Rugby team to Melbourne



Wednesday 10th July 2024

The Olympic room at the MCG

Brunton Avenue

East Melbourne 3002

We are pleased to be providing the entertainment for this welcoming dinner for the Welsh Rugby team who will be here for a two match test series against Australia. The keynote speakers will be the coaches of both teams – Warren Gatland (Wales) and Joe Schmidt (Wallabies).

The dinner is organised by The Rugby Club Victoria and tickets are available through them at contact@rugbyclubvic.com or via their website

Mooroolbark Concert

Saturday 27th July 2024 2:30 p.m.

Mooroolbark Community Centre

125 Brice Avenue,

Mooroolbark, 3138

One of the choir's favourite venues - this intimate community theatre, with its limited seating, fills quickly so book early to avoid disappointment.

For tickets, which will be available shortly, book via: www.trybooking.com/eventlist/melbournewelsh

Australia Club Concert

Friday 23rd August

Australia Club

98 - 110 William Street,

Melbourne 3000

Following the choir's well received performance last year at *Royal Melbourne Golf Club*, the choir has been invited to perform in the wonderful dining room of the **Australia Club** (with its impressive cupola), in William Street, Melbourne.

All the Melbourne clubs now seem to have their own male voice choirs so we may be facing a very discerning audience!

One of our new songs – “Let the river run”

One of the songs which our new Music Director - Mitch has introduced to the choir's repertoire is - “**Let the River Run**” - a song written, composed, and performed by American singer-songwriter Carly Simon, and the theme to the 1988 Mike Nichols film *Working Girl*.

The song won the Academy Award for *Best Original Song*, the Golden Globe Award for *Best Original Song*, and the Grammy Award for *Best Song Written Specifically for a Motion Picture or Television*.

Simon became the first artist in history to win this trio of awards for a song composed and written, as well as performed, entirely by a single artist.

The *Working Girl* soundtrack was released in 1989 and peaked at No. 45 on the Billboard 200.

Simon has stated that she found inspiration for the lyrics by first reading the original script, and then the poems of Walt Whitman.

Musically, she wanted to write a hymn to New York with a contemporary jungle beat under it, to juxtapose those opposites in a compelling way.

A statement on Simon's official website acknowledges that “the phrases ‘*Silver Cities rise*’ and ‘*The new Jerusalem*’ seem to have taken on a new meaning for many people, but the song was not originally composed with any political and/or religious overtones. “However, the phrase ‘*new Jerusalem*’ has been recognized by other observers as an allusion to the works of William Blake.

The arrangement for a four-part male choir is by Chad Weirick (who has been the Principal Accompanist and Assistant Music Director of the *Boston Gay Men's Chorus* since 1993).



Let the river run

We're coming to the edge
Running on the water
Coming through the fog
Your sons and daughters

Let the river run
Let all the dreamers
Wake the nation
Come, the New Jerusalem

Silver cities rise
The morning lights
The streets that meet them
And sirens call them on
With a song

It's asking for the taking
Trembling, shaking
Oh, my heart is aching

We're coming to the edge
Running on the water
Coming through the fog
Your sons and daughters

We the great and small
Stand on a star
And blaze a trail of desire
Through the dark'ning dawn

It's asking for the taking
Come run with me now
The sky is the colour of blue
You've never even seen
In the eyes of your lover

Oh, my heart is aching
We're coming to the edge
Running on the water
Coming through the fog
Your sons and daughters

It's asking for the taking
Trembling, shaking
Oh, my heart is aching

We're coming to the edge
Running on the water
Coming through the fog
Your sons and daughters

Let the river run
Let all the dreamers
Wake the nation
Come, the New Jerusalem

New Chorister Profile - Alex Evans - First tenor

Alex lives in Blackburn with his wife Fiona and their two children, Hugo and Clementine.



He was born in the UK and lived in London and North Yorkshire before migrating to Australia.

His career path is in the Corporate Communications sector, working for companies in the banking and agriculture fields in both Australia and the UK.

Alex has no formal musical training, although he remembers being in the school choir as a young lad and he also played in a teenage rock band that didn't progress much further than the garage!

However, he loves all forms of music and is thoroughly enjoying his time with us.

We have one of our basses - Richard Bolt, to thank for bringing him along to our choir since they are neighbours in Malcolm St., Blackburn.

Alex' other hobbies include flyfishing, golf, history and current affairs.

With a surname like Evans, one would think that he has Welsh heritage, but he hasn't yet delved much into his Welsh roots.

It appears that his great-great-grandfather was the last member of his family to have lived in Wales, at Tintern, Monmouthshire.

Alex, a warm welcome to the Melbourne Welsh and particularly to the 1st. Tenor section.

Want to join our choir

As can be seen above, life is always interesting for members of the Melbourne Welsh choir so why not join us.

Whether you've been involved in music all your life, sing in another choir, or only sing in the shower, just come along to our rehearsals at Maroondah Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood and join in the fun and the stimulating learning process, that being a part of the *Melbourne Welsh Male Choir* is all about.

The choir is open to people of all ages from 18 to 88 of any nationality, age, colour or ethnicity.

Our current and past members include people with Scots, English, Irish, New Zealand, Dutch, French, German, Egyptian, Latvian, South African, Tongan, Samoan, American and Australian ancestry.

So, provided you pass a relatively simple audition, you will be made most welcome.

While our musical heritage is Welsh and we aim to have Welsh songs as roughly a quarter of our concert programs (not necessarily all in the Welsh language), we are fundamentally a multicultural choir with less than half of us having direct Welsh ancestry.

We have an excellent rehearsal facility at Maroondah Federation Estate, with a grand piano, comfortable seats, good acoustics and facilities for tea and coffee at the interval.

In addition, we have possibly the best music director and accompanist combination in Melbourne.

Mitch Meyer, our new Music Director, has a background in music and management. An accomplished soloist as well as a respected conductor of several choirs, he was most recently the music director of the Buderim Male Choir in Queensland.

He is ably assisted by our talented accompanist, *Simon Walters*, himself a music director and arranger of some note.

We have mentors for each vocal section, who look after all new members, to ensure they are introduced to other choristers and are properly equipped with the relevant music scores. They oversee new members for the duration of their probationary period, help with pitch or pronunciation where appropriate and answer any questions, a new member might have.

There is a break for tea or coffee during rehearsals, which gives everyone the opportunity to mingle.

On the first Wednesday in the month, one of the sections provides the choir and our visitors with a light supper. Car parking is plentiful and free, while Ringwood railway station is a 5-minute walk away.

If you contact us on the phone numbers or email addresses shown in this newsletter, we will respond promptly and arrange for your introduction to the choir.

Otherwise, just come along on a Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., introduce yourself and you will be made most welcome.

Once you decide to join, we will provide you with access to our web-based member facilities, which will allow you to learn and practice the individual vocal parts at home.

This makes the process of getting up to speed with the Choir's repertoire very much easier.

We also have Welsh language sessions, given by some of the Welsh speaking members of the choir, to help new and existing choristers in the pronunciation and translation of the words of the beautiful Welsh songs in our repertoire.

Following a few rehearsals and a formal audition, you could be wearing a choir uniform and singing in one of our concerts within weeks and possibly joining us on our next tour.

Would you like to hire the choir?

Anyone who has attended our concerts at major venues such as the Melbourne Recital Centre, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo, Hamer Hall and the Melbourne Town Hall, or at smaller venues such as our venue for St David's Day Concert (the James Tatoulis Auditorium at MLC), will be aware that the choir has the skills and ability to produce and run high quality major events.

So, if you are an organization or an individual requiring anything from a short rousing opening to a conference or entertainment at a formal dinner (say), to a full two-hour concert, together with quality guest artists and an orchestra or band (if required), then please call **David Field (0418 175 584)** or any committee member to discuss how we can tailor a performance to meet your unique needs.

The choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc., at most times in the year.

Bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of up to 50 voices plus a professional music director and accompanist (with a portable electric piano, where required).

We have an eclectic repertoire, a wonderful sound and provide great value for money.

Sponsorship opportunities

The choir is a not-for-profit organisation and we rely solely on revenue from concerts, choir recordings, membership fees, sponsorship and donations for our continuing operation.

Our audiences are predominantly middle-to late aged citizens. Hence potential sponsors with products to market to this demographic e.g., those providing services in retail, hospitality, investment, insurance, real estate, retirement homes etc., might find sponsoring the choir worthwhile.

Alternatively, if you have a product or service which you believe might appeal to our audiences, then please contact us and we will be delighted to promote your company, product or service through our concerts and marketing materials.

If you would like to support the choir via a donation, please contact any member of the committee. The choir is a registered charitable body and all donations are acknowledged and are tax deductible.

Newsletter Feedback

Your feedback is important to us, so please let us know what you think about the choir, our newsletters, and our recent performances, whether live or on video.

In particular, we welcome your feedback on our recent *YouTube* videos, especially the 'Canwn - Let's Sing' video referred to above.

We are always seeking to increase our patronage and hence we are happy for you copy or circulate this newsletter to any of your friends and relatives.

If you would like us to add them to our distribution list, so they get their copy by email from the choir, simply let us know their email address.

Alternatively, they can subscribe directly to the newsletter via our website:

www.melbournwelshchoir.com.au or via our Facebook page.

We treat all information provided as confidential and subscribers can opt out at any time.

Email is our preferred way of communication with our friends and supporters, so please send us an email and we'll respond promptly to whatever queries you may have.

Alternately, if you want to email the newsletter author (Gwyn) about any of the content, please feel free to contact him on gwynh@bigpond.net.au.

Laughter is the best medicine

A Great Ending

A tough old cowboy from Texas counselled his granddaughter that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gun powder on her oatmeal every morning.

The granddaughter did this religiously until the age of 103, when she died.

She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren, and a 40-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.

Non-Astrological diagnosis

During my check-up I asked the Doctor, "Do you think I'll live a long and healthy life then?"

He replied, "I doubt it somehow. Mercury is in Uranus right now."

I said, "I don't go in for any of that astrology nonsense."

He replied, "Neither do I. My thermometer just broke."

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 always endeavour to seek permission to reproduce material from other sources and/or acknowledge the source as appropriate. Details of the background to Let the river run, came from Wikipedia.

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