

Sotto Voce

LOGO NEEDED
HERE!

Volume 17

July 2010

A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE

I have a vision for the future of TSOC. I want the TSOC to continue growing and through expansion of repertoire and performance opportunities, improve the quality and variety of sound, strengthen pitch and fine-tune ensemble. This ideal will necessitate a greater personal commitment and include performances intra and interstate. It will also require active participation in your committee's struggle for sponsors and donors. I acknowledge you are a volunteer amateur chorus and that my vision may be beyond your reach financially or logistically, but with feedback I will have a better understanding of the realistic pathway for our future. Regardless of the outcome, I will continue to push you to your highest level – whether we concentrate on being the very best 'symphonic' chorus here in Hobart, or whether in addition to that, we show the rest of the world.

The costs for independent performances will need to be funded by the Chorus (publicity, ticket sales, venue and equipment hire, and transport etc) while the TSO most likely will continue its support of the Chorus through administrative assistance, a repetiteur, a Chorus Master, scores and a rehearsal venue.

- ◆ *I believe the Chorus should expand and refine its a cappella repertoire as well as works with piano, organ, or small ensemble accompaniment*
- ◆ *We should tour Tasmania to hone our skills*
- ◆ *Performances interstate have been of immense value and I am keen to continue these collaborations. I believe one interstate program every second year is more realistic*
- ◆ *I am enthusiastic about widening your repertoire interstate with colossal choral works, rather than repeating what we present in Hobart*
- ◆ *I am hopeful an increasing number of choristers will prepare music at home so note learning at Tuesday rehearsals is kept to a minimum*
- ◆ *I expect the word 'amateur' when attached to the TSO Chorus, to refer only to its volunteer status*
- ◆ *I continue to encourage the Artistic Manager to program a choral work in TSO's Sydney tour*
- ◆ *I would like to think five years from now we could undertake an overseas tour*

Lots to think about...great choral times ahead whichever path you chose.

"El mundo de las luciérnagas ha invadido mis recuerdos y un corazón diminuto me va brotando en los dedos." Lorca

June Tyzack TSO Chorus Master

FAREWELL PETER!

Peter Fawcett recently retired from the chorus after singing with us for 16 years. The committee purchased a score of Mahler's 8th Symphony as a gift for Peter and Hilary (who also retired after singing with us for several years). June and Tony met Peter for coffee and presented him with his gift from the chorus and thanked him for his long and loyal service with the TSO Chorus. For more information on Peter's story please see page 4. We wish Peter and Hilary all the best for the future.



EISTEDDFOD

The City of Hobart Eisteddfod is currently celebrating sixty years of competitions for piano, voice, instrumental, choir and drama. Some of our choristers have entered in vocal competitions, the first of these being on Wednesday 14th July. It is unfortunate that many of these competitions don't get very big audiences, so if you're looking for some excellent performances, and would like to support our present and future performers, grab a program from Fullers, or go along to the Town Hall day or evening. There will also be details available at next Tuesday's rehearsal.

MEMBER PROFILE: Sally Brown (*Alto*)

When I'm not singing I like to spend time in my vegetable garden in which I grow most of what I need, with a strong emphasis on "greens". Also, if the sun is out – I have to be in it preferably with a glass of wine and several hours to spare!

I first discovered music when I was 4 years old. According to my mum, herself a teacher of singing and music, I came home from the drive-in (remember those) after seeing Sound of Music and plonked myself at the piano and started playing the tunes by ear.

I love to sing now because as a 17 year old Conservatorium of Music student I was told by the voice tutor never to open my mouth ever again in his presence. Why? Always having been pretty good at sight reading I was assisting some of the blokes with their tenor part when he walked in – late! He was furious with me. Having been roared out of the room, I did not sing another single note for about 25 years, concentrating instead on classical piano and classical ballet.

I have never learned to ride a bike. I have had experts as young as 3 years old try to teach me, and I am hopeless.



My favourite thing to cook is fresh fish fillets, dusted in a freezer bag with half flour and half curry powder, pan fried in lime juice, served with steamed rice and florets of broccoli and other green things.

I have a few very memorable musical moments, including that moment I walked onto the stage of the Sydney Opera House to sing in Gerontius with the TSO Chorus, and seeing my supportive partner Simon in the audience. Also, singing serious Gospel in amongst the women of the Lavendar Lights Choir in New York was unforgettable.

My greatest achievement in life has been to survive a chute malfunction in my first ever solo parachute jump, and return to earth among a flock of sheep with no injury to either sheep or myself.

My preferred cold drink is a strong whisky and dry, and my preferred hot drink is tea, again strong, in a cup. I am not a mug kind of girl.

My favourite book is Cry to Heaven which tells the story of a young castrati singer in Italy. It is a wonderfully poignant story of how important the voice is to the church, and how misappropriated power affected the life of this boy with a golden voice.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Fundraising

The committee has decided to make the raffle the main fundraising activity in 2010. It is Dick Shoobridge's idea and he has done the planning. There are six attractive prizes. We hope each chorister can sell 10 tickets at \$5 each, in order to reach target sales of 800 tickets. The raffle will be drawn at our concert on 20 October. Cut-off date for selling tickets is 19 October. Check the notice board for more details.

Mainland tours

This has been an item at several meetings, following the successful venture to sing Mahler 8 at the Adelaide Festival. June has now produced a survey to canvass everyone's opinions about the future direction of the TSOC. This survey includes tours to the mainland.

AGM

We believe that a regular turnover of people serving on the committee is important for ensuring that the views of all the chorus are well represented. Please consider nominating for the new committee.

Duncan How

First performed in 1888, Fauré composed his Requiem after the death of his father but before completion, his mother passed away. The Requiem is an expression of Fauré's personal tragedy, though he is thought not to have had strong religious beliefs. It was performed at his funeral in 1924.

FROM THE SANDPIT

The TSO Chorus Totally Unofficial Sandpit is a Facebook group where choristers can informally share anything related to music. To see the content, you need to have a Facebook profile, but it's important to realise that if using Facebook doesn't interest you, you're not missing out on any vital communications to do with the chorus. At last count there were 29 people in The Sandpit.

For those who are wondering what it's all about, here's a sample of recent activity:

April:

- ◆ Beth posted the links to some of the Mahler photos

May:

- ◆ Simone posted a link to Sotto Voce
- ◆ Beth posted some information about the producer of our Christmas Carols - she was indeed a dual aria winner!
- ◆ Beth posted a link to the first review of the Mendelssohn recordings from 2008
- ◆ Joy posted a link to a YouTube video of Andrew Bainbridge performing in a barber shop quartet with his students at Hutchins (the night he was late to rehearsal and turned up in a dinner suit!)

June:

- ◆ Stephanie posted links to YouTube versions of some of the Spanish pieces
- ◆ Elizabeth sent the link to the photo of us at Government House
- ◆ Beth posted information about The Black Folder - the ultimate chorister's music folder
- ◆ Various people made comments, suggestions, talked about how tired they were, etc!

See you in the Sandpit!

Beth Warren

MINI BREVE

Brett Weymark has been Musical Director of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs since 2003. He'll be conducting our Christmas concert in December. Here's a quick translation guide to prepare you for the event:

- ◆ *How fascinating!*—It's just all gone horribly wrong
- ◆ *It will be a thrilling performance*—There are plenty of opportunities for it to go horribly wrong
- ◆ *Singing on one buttock*—Sitting forward in your seat to sing
- ◆ *Five second rule*—Look up at least every five seconds to avoid a car crash

Beth Warren

RULE BRITANNIA!

I'd always thought Rule, Britannia! (RB) was a bit of British Victorian pomposity sung by flag waving poms with plums in their mouths. This isn't the case. RB came from a poem written by James Thomson and set to music by Thomas Arne in 1740.

It was first included in a masque (court entertainment) called *Alfred*, about Alfred the Great. *Alfred* was written for Frederick, son of George I, then Prince of Wales, to help build his image. Thomson and George Mallett wrote the libretto and Mallett had updated the words twice by 1753, by which time Alfred had become a three act opera. The 1753 version of RB is the one we sing today.

Both Thomson and Mallett were Scots, poets and playwrights, who lived their adult lives in England. *Alfred* linked Frederick to Alfred the Great, the past English hero king and to the then current issue of stronger English sea power. Frederick didn't get on with his father and died in 1751 at the age of 44.

Thomas Arne was an English composer. As a child he smuggled a spinet into his room and would practice at night, using a handkerchief to keep the noise down. His father was an upholsterer. After school Thomas was articulated to a solicitor for three years. His father was persuaded to allow Thomas to follow his passion for music.

At the time, England had a constitutional monarchy, which limited the Crown's powers. Historically there was distrust of a strong army and a fear of its potential use for suppression, with Cromwell's time a recent memory. There was strong support to expand Britain's navy as sea based power was seen as less of an internal threat and necessary to keep those pesky foreigners at bay.

Rule Britannia became instantly popular and has been used by a number of composers, including Handel, Wagner, Johann Strauss, Arthur Sullivan and Alexandre Guilmant, in films such as James Bond movies and *The Italian Job*, in TV ads, parodied by Flanders and Swann and referred to by David Bowie and Pink Floyd.

Dick Shoobridge with apologies/thanks to Wikipedia

"I have never acknowledged the difference between serious music and light music. There is only good music and bad music."

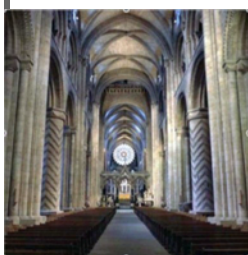
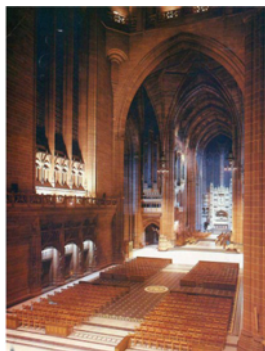
Kurt Weill

Our Elijah will be broadcast on Classic FM on Monday 19 July at 8pm.

MEMORABLE CHORAL MOMENTS... (MCM's) Peter Fawcett

It all started at sixteen when I was invited to join an informal group to work through Byrd's *four-part Mass*. The beauty of polyphony dawned!

The combination of music and architectural space has often generated MCMs for me. In my late teens I had the good fortune to join summer schools of the *Royal Society for Church Music* at the Anglican cathedrals of Rochester (with side trip to Canterbury) and Liverpool. The latter is a vast neo-Gothic building, similar in size to St Peter's Rome, and has a stone archway and platform across the nave. To stand on this is a spatial experience. To sing from it Charles Wood's eight-part *Hail, gladdening light*, was just thrilling.



My first oratorio was Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Durham University in the fine Romanesque cathedral. I didn't sing I was needed in the violins - but it was still a MCM.

Two memorable events soon after, with different community choirs near

Kendal, north-west England. First, a performance of Duruflé's *Requiem Mass* under the direction of John Hopkins in a country parish church. Hopkins, then based in New Zealand, was on a return visit to his homeland. Second, sung in a festival at the great Winter Gardens in Blackpool, an *a capella* setting of Schubert's *Du bist die Ruh*. Our director was a genius at weighing words and making them tell.



Amateur music festivals were very much alive. I formed a male-voice choir at work (civil engineers and surveyors) to enter the Westmorland Festival and we won with Shaker's song *Simple Gifts*.

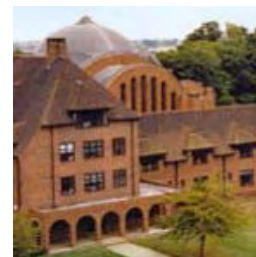


Some years later, work took me to Nottingham University in the English Midlands. Many MCMs! The Opera Group produced Boito's *Mefistofele* which has a major chorus role. I almost blacked out with all the drama.

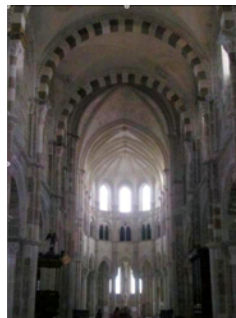
The university chorus performed Rachmaninov's unaccompanied *Vespers* in the Russian Orthodox Church in South Kensington, London – a very moving experience.

The English Sinfonia (in Nottingham) had an associated chorale and we performed Monteverdi's *Vespers* in the

splendidly appropriate neo-Byzantine chapel at Kelham Hall Seminary, (where a certain Miss Hilary Pardoe was on the staff of the English Sinfonia...)



I also sang with a Leicester-based chamber group and we took part in a music festival in the Morvan district of France. The Festival Chorus performed Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* in the very beautiful cathedral at Vézelay.



That was in 1985 and the next year we relocated to Sydney where I had some of my best MCMs, not so much because of the architectural settings but in finding real energy in the choral scene. I was an early member of Anthony Walker's Contemporary Singers and was an augmenting member of Nicholas Routley's University Chamber

Choir. We did a quite political Anti-Bicentennial Concert in the Great Hall, including Dallapiccola's *Canti di Prigione* and Schönberg's *Friede auf Erden* – the latter forming a MCM because it was so harmonically tricky!

For the last 21 years we have been in Hobart and there have been many MCMs with various choirs. For me, the most memorable have been performances of unusual or new music. Ben Sibson's *Voices of History* and Zelenka's *Missa: Gratias...* with Chorale (and I pay tribute to Liz Eden), new works by Sculthorpe, Schulz, Grenfell and Mills with TSOC. What a privilege to be a participant in these premieres. Our attempt at Frank Martin's *Mass for Double Chorus* was a highlight too. There have been a few bizarre but still memorable events, such as Chorale's Guinness Record Carol-singing at the DEC, carols on a trailer in the Claremont Shopping Village car park, and a Mothers' Day Concert inside Hastings Caves.

Another memorable privilege was to take part in the TSOC interstate excursions – *Daphnis and Chloë* in 2006 and



Dream of Gerontius in 2008 (I'll never forget Ashkenazy's conducting!) at the Sydney Opera House, and this year Mahler's *Eighth Symphony* at the Adelaide Entertainment

Centre under Arvo Volmer. His Brahms *German Requiem* with us a few years ago is an enduring warm memory too.

Thankyou June, for the great energy you bring to the chorusmaster role and I wish the TSO Chorus all success in the future.

PERFORMERS WANTED

Wayfarers Australia, directed by Judy Clingan AM, is looking for experienced choral singers with at least one other relevant skill (eg instrumental playing, acting, dance, eurythmy, teacher training, photography) to join a small troupe (minimum 10, maximum 20) in 2012 to tour Australia and the world.

Almost the whole year will be taken up: intensive rehearsals in Canberra from Christmas 2011 until Easter 2012 (we will seek billeting for interstate performers); touring Australia for at least two months; then India, China, Russia, eastern Europe, western Europe, northern Europe, UK until early November.

The repertoire will range across Mediaeval, Renaissance, Baroque, classical, Romantic, 20th and 21st century art music, plus folk music from many cultures – with a component of short, easy pieces to teach in school and community workshops; the music theatre repertoire will hopefully include *The Ring Bearer*, being Judy's dramatic adaptation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* with lots of music; Judy's *Kakadu*, depicting the changing seasons of Northern Australia; a shortened version of one of Shakespeare's more accessible plays, with lots of music, and two music theatre pieces suitable for primary school children to watch and/or perform. Performances and workshops will aim to inspire, to enliven, and to foster a positive approach to our world's needs.

Every member of the group will (a) contribute \$1000 or one week's unpaid teaching music theatre at Judy's Imagine workshops in Canberra in January 2011 to fund touring vehicles (b) find his/her own return air fare to Europe (say \$5000) by late 2011 (c) have access to another \$5000 for contingencies. The aim is that the group's performances and workshops will cover internal travel, food and accommodation needs. It is expected that once a person commits to the group, nothing but huge and unplanned life changes will cause him/her to abandon the project. Commitment will be necessary by February 2011.

There will be a two-day meeting of aspiring members of the group in Canberra in the week before Christmas 2010.

Please contact Judy on judithclingan@me.com or 02 62874132 or 0410 617 427.



Chorus Oz
2010

RELIVING THE DREAM

Every June long weekend, the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs host Chorus Oz at the Sydney Opera House. This is an opportunity for choristers all over Australia to rehearse and perform a major choral work. Chorus Oz has been running for six years and has covered three requiems, *Carmina Burana* and *The Creation*. For 2010 the work chosen was *Dream of Gerontius*.

The \$245 fee covers score, rehearsal CD, rehearsals in the Opera House with the delightful Brett Weymark and 900 choristers, lunch and a performance t-shirt. We rocked up 8:30 Saturday morning, collected our tickets and found our box. There are so many in the choir, we sit in the upper level boxes, as well as behind the orchestra. The morning rehearsal was for altos and basses. Usually it's altos and sopranos, but Brett reasoned sopros and tenors don't like to sing before lunchtime.

We went through most of the chorus sections with accompaniment by two grand pianos—one playing the orchestral reduction, one playing our lines. By lunchtime we hadn't got to the end of the work but were finished for the day and Brett implored us to do some homework before *chardonnay hour*. Our next call was 10am Sunday. For the first time the full choir came together. There were 120 men and altos outnumbered sopranos three to two.

During warm-up a group of Japanese tourists came in to the hall. Brett made them sing—and they did a great job! At the end of the morning dodgy bits were still dodgy and we went to find our sandwiches and collect our t-shirts, complete with place names on the back. Choristers came from all over Australia, some from New Zealand and even one from Jakarta, another from England. Lindisfarne—my home suburb—got a mention, as did my sister's south Sydney suburb of Bonnet Bay.

After lunch we reconvened with full orchestra and soloists. *Gerontius* was sung by Fernando del Valle—new to Australia, but a wonderful voice. Michael Lewis sang the Priest and Sian Pendry was the Angel. All first rate.

We finished at 4:30 and had to be back in our seats by 5:50 for a 6pm concert. There *was* an audience and yes, there were more of us than them, but they were very enthusiastic. Brett promised “a thrilling performance”, due to the potential for it to all go horribly wrong!

The whole experience was great fun. The performance may not be the same standard as our concerts with Ashkenazy, but the chance to spend the weekend in the Opera House, with 900 other people who are equally passionate about music, is one to savour.

Next year, Chorus Oz will tackle Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. Go to: www.sydneyphilharmonia.com.au

Contact Details

Chorus Administrator

Trish Robinson

Phone: (03) 6232 4421

Mobile: 0409 148 382

Email: ChorusAdmin@tso.com.au

Websites

[www.tso.com.au/aboutthetso/
tsochorus.html](http://www.tso.com.au/aboutthetso/tsochorus.html)

key.org.au/tsoc/

[www.facebook.com/group.php?
gid=8510342527](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=8510342527)

Are you a new member of TSO Chorus? Have you changed your contact details? Please contact Chorus Administrator, Trish Robinson for a membership form or to advise of changed details. Keeping membership up-to-date is essential for the smooth running of the chorus and we appreciate your assistance.

Your Committee

Tony Parker
Sheila Knowlton
Eryl Raymond
Jo Field
Duncan How
Jennifer Phillips
Dick Shoobridge
Tony Sprent
Johanna van Tienen

Reminders

Name Tags

Please wear to all rehearsals

Fund Raising

Please support our activities. The committee organises raffles, sports cards and occasionally social events. Surplus funds help support the Chorus.

Calendar of Events

Chorus Performances

• **7—10 July**
Festival of Voices:
“A Spanish Pilgrimage
Various city sites

• **Saturday 28 August**
Fauré Requiem
Federation Concert Hall

• **Wednesday 20 October**
TSO Goes to the Opera
Federation Concert Hall

• **Saturday 11 December**
Christmas with TSO
Federation Concert Hall

Chorus Development

• **Date to be advised**
Vocal Technique Class
With Jane Edwards

• **Date to be advised**
Vocal Technique Class
With Christopher Richardson

Chorus Activities

• **Tuesday 20 July**
TSO Chorus AGM

TSO Performances

• **Saturday 10 July**
The Lark Ascending
Federation Concert Hall

• **Saturday 17 July**
Viennese Classics
Federation Concert Hall

• **Wednesday 28 July**
ABC Young Performers
Federation Concert Hall

• **Wednesday 4 August**
Name that Tune!
Federation Concert Hall

• **Friday 13 August**
Grand Concertos
Federation Concert Hall

• **Thursday 19 August**
Rogers and Hammerstein
Federation Concert Hall

• **Friday 3 September**
Schubert 's Unfinished
Federation Concert Hall

• **Saturday 18 September**
Russian Romantics
Federation Concert Hall

• **Saturday 2 October**
TSO Gala Ball
Wrest Point Casino

• **Monday 11 October**
Classics Old and New
Federation Concert Hall

• **Monday 1 November**
Best of Baroque
Federation Concert Hall

• **Saturday 13 November**
My Homeland
Federation Concert Hall

• **Thursday 25 November**
Bernd Glemser in Recital
Hobart Town Hall

• **Saturday 27 November**
Bernd's Back!
Federation Concert Hall

• **Monday 29 November**
New Worlds
Federation Concert Hall

Do you have an event coming up? Send details to Simone by Friday 20 August for inclusion in the September edition of Sotro Voce.