



Sydney Male Choir



Newsletter May 2011

The Tale so Far



Editorial

We are well into the year now, with six events under our belts—only 25 to go at the last count! For details of these events see Page 6

We have had our Annual General Meeting and the new Committee is in full swing. New President, Peter Gair has an article on Page 3 and the rest of the Committee are also featured.

Friends of the Choir - please see Page 5 where there is important information about future communication.

I hope you find this issue interesting and helpful.

Peter Marshall

March

The first event of the year was something a little unusual for the choir



as we were asked to sing at a **Farewell Gala Dinner for Ray Fisher, Past President of Roads Australia at Water's Restaurant** in Walsh Bay. Brian Ellis had adapted the words of *There's no*

business like show business with many references to work on the roads and he sang the verses while the choir, all in hard hats, joined in on the choruses. The audience loved it!

The delights of **Kiama** were to be seen at our next concert which had been arranged to help support the work of Christ Church, Kiama and the Spirit of uBuntu' s work via Rotary with HIV/Aids affected families in South Africa. A capacity audience enjoyed a varied programme of songs from the Sydney Male Choir and the piano playing of **Mark**

Matthews. A few days before the concert Eleanor Gair, our Accompanist, injured herself, had to be taken to hospital and was unable to play. At the eleventh hour Houston located a former student of his, **Bethany Morris**, and she was able to understudy for Eleanor. Bethany received



copies of the music on Friday and played for us on Sunday! What a remarkable performance and the Sydney Male Choir is very grateful for her contribution to a very rewarding concert. We were honoured to have in the audience **Brennan Keats**, pictured here with Houston, arranger of 2 of our pieces written by his father, **Horace Keats**. We have been asked to return next year!

April

The Silver Kings are born!!

On Friday 1 April the **Sydney Male Choir** sang at the **Sydney Kings** basketball match held at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. Despite the fact that one of the items performed was *'When the Kings go marching in'* the Kings lost this last match of the season - better luck next year guys. There was a crowd of over 9,000 people there for the match and here is a quote from the Sydney King's website that

summarises what they felt about the choir's performance —'even an appearance by the *Sydney Male Choir, who sang the National Anthem and wowed the massive crowd with their emotional, uplifting pre-game performance.*' Rodney O the Sydney Kings presenter christened the **Sydney Male Choir** - the **Silver Kings!**



Next was a return visit for the **Sydney Male Choir** to **Chevalier College, Bowral** and to the glorious countryside and Autumnal colours of the Southern Highlands. It's a pity the weather couldn't have lived up to the golden colours being shown by the avenues of trees as there was a chill wind and rain. The locals, the brave folk that they are, reckoned it was 'bracing' but those from further north called it 'cold'. However the welcome was anything but cold - the good folk of Bowral gave the choir a wonderful reception and for many it was a renewal of contact from last year. Again the worthy cause for the concert was the **Challenge Southern Highlands**



charity which helps disabled people to flourish by providing support and employment at a local nursery. This cause is very close to the heart of Denise Layton, wife of ex-President Jim and it was fitting that Denise made the introductory remarks and Jim acted as Compère. The choir was in fine form and responded to the audience's enthusiasm by raising the level of performance to new heights. A varied programme was enjoyed by one and all - choir as much as audience and 2 encores were requested! Invitations to return next year were numerous! Just make it a little warmer next year, please

- and this is from a Pom!

We had the honour to sing at the **Anzac Day Dawn** service in **Martin Place, Sydney**, as we have done at each of these services since their inauguration. Unfortunately the weather was not kind to us or the thousands of people gathered to pay their respects to the armed forces personnel of Australia and New Zealand who laid down their lives defending freedom. We all got soaked but the sense of occasion and the solemnity of the service made it all worth while. Here are some of the guys—wet but unbowed!



The final concert for April involved a trip up to the Nelson Bay area and in particular to St Phillips Christian College Performing Arts Centre, Salamander Bay. Sharing the bill were the **Port Stephens Choral Ensemble**, who are based at Soldiers Point and led by their Musical Director, the locally renowned soprano **Kathryn Dries**. The concert was to raise money for the Ensemble and for local music students.



President Peter's Piece

Hello everyone,

Well it does seem like it was only last week since the choir's annual general meeting and elections, yet here we are in the middle of May and it already feels that a cold winter is upon us.



I think the **Sydney Male Choir** has elected a very strong and dedicated team for its new committee and office bearers. **Gary Withyman** was elected **Vice President**; we have four new members on the committee in **Wolf von Kehler, Des McEvoy, Tony Phillips and Nick Brown. Jim Layton** as ex-President has agreed to stay on the committee and his experience will be invaluable. It was sad to lose Peter Marshall who with his wife Jan, would like to do a lot more traveling in this fair land (although not leaving the first tenors, thankfully, or his important work on the choir's website). It was also regrettable that Brian Ellis, our tireless engagement officer who also chaired the marketing sub-committee, has resigned from the committee. He was responsible for, among other things, raising opportunities for concerts throughout the year and was a hard working committee man. His place as leader on this marketing sub-committee has been ably taken up by **Stan Alchin**. The usual suspects remaining on the Committee and are doing a sterling job are **Ron Brown (Treasurer), Tom Coghlan (Secretary)** and **Lloyd Watson (Librarian)**.

Houston Dunleavy our new Musical Director has taken to the **Sydney Male Choir** with great enthusiasm and personality, and is quickly broadening our musical horizons with new repertoire whilst not neglecting the traditional fundamentals of male choir singing and our own wonderful library of hymns and songs gathered over many years (especially the Sea Shanties). Our guys are growing in respect and trust for Houston's musical knowledge and abilities, also his accessibility and consideration to any worthy suggestions. Houston is very much aware of the men's deep affection and esteem for our previous Musical Director, the wonderful **Alan Thrift**, and the high presentation standard he set over the 20 years of his leadership. Houston, I believe is happy to rival these high expectations but with his own personal expression.

We have a most important concert on the last Sunday of this month (May 29th.) It will be held in the **Sutherland Entertainment Centre** at 2pm (please check our website). We hope this will be the commencement of a great annual association with the people of Sutherland Shire, where many of our choristers come from. The producer of this concert is our second tenor **Des McEvoy** and he has put a tremendous amount of work into seeing it succeed and has even gone further by offering a most glamorous prize to some lucky person, a holiday on the gold coast for one week for 4 people including the air-fares, limousine pick up from the Gold Coast airport and \$1000 spending money....what a prize! We hope to see as many folks there as possible.

We have a number of concerts to complete before year's end and another exciting country tour of the south west towns of NSW in the middle of September. I will give more details in the next newsletter so until then, sing on the note!

Peter Gair

Notes from Houston



This year seems to have begun with almost no time to draw breath after the summer recess. The choir has performed a number of concerts up and down the east coast of NSW, all of them to acclaim and great audience satisfaction. We have put together a sort of "touring show" for the first half of the year, while learning new music that will be added over the coming 18 months or so. Some works that we haven't sung for a while have been given a new airing - particularly for the upcoming Sutherland concert.

In the meantime, I've been open to, and been receiving, lots of welcome feedback from both audience members and choristers, which has covered a wide range of topics and opinions ranging from "we are getting too much new stuff to learn" to "why do you always sing the same stuff?" to "I LOVE learning new music!"

So you can see there is a balancing act going on, and part of my job here, as directed by the committee, is to balance those points of view along with building new audiences in different parts of NSW. At the same time, I am concentrating in rehearsals on increasing the performance standard of the group and developing strategies for faster learning of new music.

So, we are piloting a number of projects such as the increased involvement of part leaders in the learning process (hence the Saturday rehearsal/retreat on 11th June), singing at the Sydney Kings basketball games, inviting a wide variety of guest artists to join us in our major concerts (and this is particularly important when it comes to building new audiences) and the introduction of new and varied music to the repertoire - particularly the music of Australian composers, past and present

A word about new music:

Some members have expressed that they are worried that new music is being added too quickly, or that there is too much of it - a lot has shown up in folders recently. However, not all of this music is for one concert or even for this year! New music will be added slowly to the choir's repertoire and for specific deadlines. It isn't professional to simply wait until a piece is "ready" before scheduling it. The best inspiration in the world is a deadline. I suppose I am used to having to produce the goods in a specific time. I see no reason for not bringing that culture to the choir. Again, it was why I was hired and what the committee has asked me to do.

So, there are two new brand new pieces ("Over the Shining Sea" and "Swing Low") for the Sutherland concert, one more ("O Magnum Mysterium") for the Brass and Voices concert in July, one to be learned over the workshop day and premiered at the Town Hall ("Two Flowers") and one to be workshopped a little and learned over the July/August for the Town Hall concert (Ave Maria).

New music will stay in the repertoire because one performance is usually not enough for any piece after the work we put in to learning it, and there are certain things that we can discover about a piece only after a number of performances. Also, it would be great to have a number of new works, tested in the fire of the concert situation, that we can record for the next CD.

I am very excited about the path ahead and look forward to working with a visionary committee such as the one we have. I want to keep you all informed of new developments and, most of all, I want to assure you that I am always open to feedback from members either directly or, if you aren't comfortable with that, indirectly through a committee member or a part leader.

Yours in the joy of song!

Houston Dunleavy

Sydney Male Choir Committee 2011/12

President: Peter Gair

Secretary: Tom Coghlan



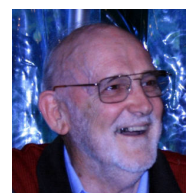
Treasurer: Ron Brown

Vice President: Gary Withyman



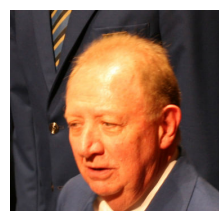
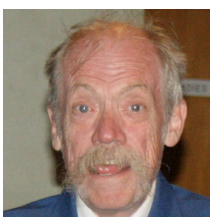
Committee Member & Librarian: Lloyd Watson

Committee Member: Jim Layton



Committee Member: Nick Brown

Committee Member: Des McEvoy



Committee Member: Tony Phillips

Committee Member: Wolf von Kehler



Friends of the Choir

We have over 2,000 “*Friends of the Choir*” who have shown an interest in our activities. We are delighted to have such a following and would like to keep you all informed about our activities. Unfortunately the cost of posting information has become prohibitive and we have decided to switch to email, which is a far more practical option. If you are an existing “*Friend of the Choir*”, or would like to become one, simply send us an email at webmaster@sydneymalechoir.com.au with the subject **Friend** and we will add you to our mailing list.

Events for 2011

Sunday 29th May	Sutherland Entertainment Centre	2pm
Sunday 5th June	Beecroft Uniting Church	2pm
Saturday 25th June	Auburn - Dooley's Catholic Club for Auburn Dist. Cricket Club	2.30pm
Saturday 9th July	Brass & Voices, with National Australia Brass, Cooranbong	4pm
Sunday 10th July	Brass & Voices, with National Australia Brass, Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sydney	2pm
Sunday 24th July	Dee Why RSL	3.30pm
Sunday 4th September	12th Annual City of Sydney Concert, Sydney Town Hall	2pm
10th to 24th September	Country NSW Tour - To be Confirmed	
Sunday 23rd October	Mingara	2pm
Friday 11th November	Remembrance Day Service, Cenotaph Martin Place	11am
Sunday 13th November	Springwood Uniting Church	2pm

Songs of the Sea @ Sutherland



On **Sunday 29th May** the **Sydney Male Choir** will be performing in **Songs of the Sea**, an exciting concert at the **Sutherland Entertainment Centre** together with **Nick Rheinberger**, ABC Morning Show host, eminent folk music artist and multi-instrumentalist.

Make sure you book your tickets early for this opportunity to hear a great choir and a wonderful solo artist together for the first time. Tickets available from Sutherland Entertainment Centre Box Office Tel. 9521 8888

Free chance to win -

a WEEK on the Gold Coast, in an "Aquarius on the Beach" apartment;
return airfares for FOUR PEOPLE;

- * stretch Limousine transfers to and from Coolangatta Airport; and
- * a voucher for up to \$1000 spending money (some conditions apply).

for further details click see our website - www.sydneychoir.com.au

