



This is the last issue of *Overtures* for 2011. As you will read in the notes from our President and Musical Director, it has been a challenging year. The choir has worked hard and we are confident that next year's extensive concert programme will have things that appeal to everyone, young and old. If you did not receive this copy of *Overtures* electronically and would like to be kept in touch with the choir's activities please become an "electronic" Friend of the Choir. Just send an email to webmaster@sydneymalechoir.com.au marking the subject "Friend". You will then be added to our mailing list and receive *Overtures* each time it is published.

A Note from our President



All organizations need change and the choir is no exception. The alternative is stagnation! Change has been the hallmark of 2011 with a new Musical Director, a new President and new members on a number of our committees. This has led to new music and new approaches to performance which some, both friends and choristers alike, have found quite a challenge.

As President, I am confident that we will emerge next year with more zest, more variety and more enthusiasm than ever. The signs are already there and we have, without a doubt, experienced some magnificent highlights this year including the Riverina tour and two professionally conducted recording sessions, which we hope will result in a new CD being released in the New Year.

My thanks go in particular to our musical director Houston Dunleavy and pianist Eleanor Gair for making all this possible.

Singing is but the tip of the iceberg. Few realize how much work is needed to make the choir a success, but I do, and I would like to thank all those who have helped this year with planning, arranging, marketing, logistical support, computing and all those other things that are essential if we are to produce the sorts of concert we want to offer to you our friends.

Our eyes are firmly on the future. We aim to make 2012 a year when the choir breaks the mold and has something new and dynamic to offer to friends and singers alike. The aim is for rejuvenation, so we are in excellent shape for the rigorous programme that is planned for our centenary year 2013. This will include the ANZAC Day dawn service at Villers-Bretonneux in France, a concert tour of England and Wales and a gala concert in Sydney.

I wish all our friends and choristers a very Happy Christmas and hope we will have the pleasure of your company again in 2012.

Peter Gair

Forthcoming Concerts

Details of major concerts and how to obtain tickets will normally be found on our website www.sydneymalechoir.com.au. The concert programme for 2012 is still being finalised, but we are hoping to perform at Sutherland in March, Cooranbong in May and in the city of Sydney in September.



sydney@mcArthur.com.au

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A Note from our Musical Director



It's been an exciting and challenging year for the choir, as new pathways are being forged while keeping the best from the past open. We have taken on board new repertoire such as the Horace and Brennan Keats song cycle, Franz Biebl's setting of "Ave Maria" and Morten Lauridsen's "O Magnum Mysterium". All have been mastered and are ready to record. My own arrangement of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" has also been added to the existing repertoire to expand the choir's collection of spirituals.

Our concert at the Town Hall, proved an artistic success, and a great new friend of the choir was made in Gavin Lockley who, after just the rehearsal, invited the choir to be part of his next recording venture. We duly journeyed to Trackdown Recording Studios on 25th October to record an energetic version of the National Anthem, complete with 80-piece pre-recorded orchestra! Such projects are vital for the

exposure and branding of the choir, as well as being exciting and fulfilling.

The recent tour of the Riverina was a resounding success from a musical point of view. The choir sang superbly! Much of our new repertoire was tried out on the tour and the singers came away confident and secure with it. The hospitality of the people of the Riverina was a joy. I don't think I've ever eaten that many scones! Together with concerts as far afield as Springwood and Tumbi Umbi, the choir's schedule has not faltered. With the plans for the next couple of years in full swing, there's not going to much time to draw breath!

My grateful thanks go to Eleanor, a wonderful musician, the committee for all their support and hard work, to the men of the choir who sing, transport risers, deal with sound equipment, publicity and marketing etc. etc. etc. And my thanks to the ladies who staff the front of house and sell the CDs. You all make this a truly joyous position to hold!

Dr Houston Dunleavy

A Note from a Chorister

"To be born Welsh is to be born privileged. Not with a silver spoon in your mouth, but music in your blood and poetry in your soul"



I am proud to say that Wales, the "Land of Song", is my birthplace and music has been a major part of my life. I was never a boy soprano, but my music teacher at school recognised some potential when my voice broke to a reasonable baritone. I did National Service with the RAF attached to the British Embassy in Washington DC, where I met my Australian wife Jan. We were married in Wales and settled in Sydney.

My introduction to male voice choirs was through barbershop, first with the "Sydneyiders" and then "Broadway" which eventually became "Sydney Harmony Chorus". My own barbershop quartet "Quadrasonix" won the NSW Seniors Barbershop

Quartet Gold Medal in 2000. The quartet's bass, Gordon Mar, also sings with the Sydney Male Choir.

Wanting less competitive music I joined the Sydney Male Choir in 1997 and settled very quickly into the Tenor 2 section. I love the music, the companionship and the friendly atmosphere that the choristers offer to choristers and members of the public alike. I have participated in several concert tours, including to New Zealand and Country NSW. I am active on the choirs Marketing Committee where I can bring previous professional experience to bear.

Houston has brought an exciting change of musical direction whilst remaining aware of our traditional repertoire which will keep us linked to the past. For me it's a pleasure to be part of this great choir "bringing joy to our audience through song"

Tony Rathbone



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