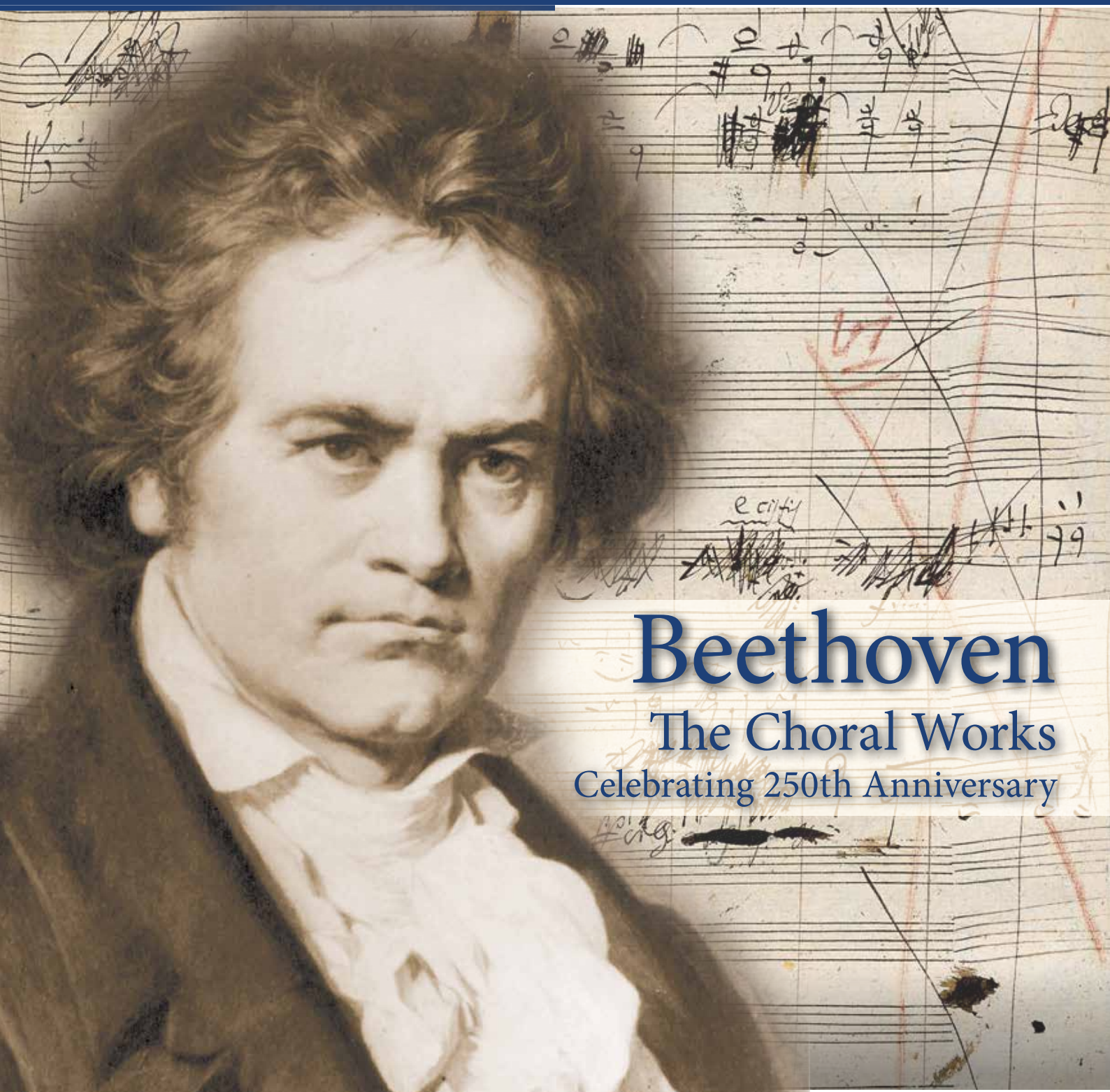


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Sing Out

Volume 37 Number 3 2020



Beethoven

The Choral Works
Celebrating 250th Anniversary

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Our Cover

Beethoven

The Choral Works
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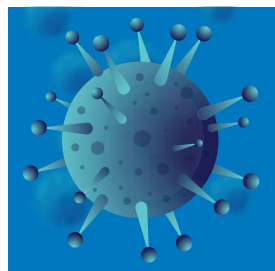
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President's Message



President
Dr Debra Shearer-Dirié

Raise a glass to celebrate!

We have nearly made it through a tremendously difficult year, and we all need to raise a glass at the end of this year to celebrate the challenges we have had to leap over along its path. The ANCA community has grown stronger across the nation as we have reached out to each other to navigate through changes and to find ways of singing together in our “new normal.” In recent history, I don’t think there has been a time when the value of connecting through song and the many benefits to everyone’s wellbeing that participates in singing together, has been more essential to our everyday life and has been so missed. Let’s hope that there are some opportunities for us to participate in, or at least hear, some live singing over the coming months. We look forward to hearing about those performances.

The results are in from our National Survey which closed at the end of September. Thank you to those who took the time to complete the survey. We had 377 completed responses which provided excellent informative data. The responses seem to reflect the proportion of members from each State/Territory Chapter. You will be able to read more detail from the survey within this *Sing Out* but of particular interest were the questions that referred to “what are the most important current ANCA activities.” The majority answered the most important was ANCA’s advocacy on behalf of the choral music sector (61%). Due to the year that we have experienced, it is understandable that this would rate high on everyone’s list. National Council is taking this on board to prepare the way forward, looking at how ANCA can advocate for our choral music sector on an ongoing basis. Not surprisingly rating under advocacy in importance are the ANCA communications (56%), AON insurance (48%) and then workshops and training opportunities (45%).

Another interesting highlight from the National Survey was the professional development areas that are of most value to our members. 53% mentioned vocal health and development as the most valuable events, followed by motivating and inspiring choirs, rehearsal strategies, copyright law, warm-up routines and repertoire selection. Another interesting statistic that came from the survey was that 50% of those who completed the survey would prefer to read

their *Sing Out* Magazine in a digital format. We realize there are differing opinions across our membership for digital versus hardcopy of the magazine but I would have to say that this year, as we have distanced and not been able to gather together, each issue of our *Sing Out* magazine has been uploaded as a FlipBook for anyone to read. We felt it important to make our magazine accessible to all who were interested and uploading a digital format made it easier for choristers of our member choirs to access.

In recent months we have also put a call out to choir directors, administrators, choristers and the wider community to join the ANCA mailing list. We realize that sometimes the very informative ANCA e-newsletters are sent to the conductor or administrator of choral organizations, but don’t get handed down the line. If you would like to receive this information directly, go to the ANCA website and sign up.

Each year the ANCA National Council always attempts to have a face-to-face Strategy meeting day. In the years when Choralfest takes place, we are able to take the time to talk through overarching issues for the organization and plan for the future. With the pandemic this year we were only able to do this via Zoom. I would like to thank all of the State Chapter presidents, Caroline from TAS, and others that attended our day for their time and energy. It is clearly evident that all of your State Presidents want to provide the most value for your membership and are dedicated to providing opportunities to further enable our choral communities to sing.

We look forward to bringing you details of how ANCA is going to celebrate its 30-year anniversary starting with the Research Conference in Sydney in April 2021. Please see inside for more information on how to register.

Over the break please be kind to yourselves. Take time away from your devices to enjoy the music and look after those around you.

Dr Debra Shearer-Dirié
Dr Debra Shearer-Dirié

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From the Editor

Although many of our members may not have the opportunity to perform his great works, I am sure we all are inspired by the choral music of Beethoven and it is very appropriate that we celebrate his 250th birthday (December 17) with two important articles in this issue of *Sing Out* – one a survey of the large-scale works, the other a look at some of the best recordings. (And there are a couple of small-scale pieces that should be quite accessible to all our readers!)

News from the chapters is, as might be expected, somewhat limited, with many of our choirs operating at reduced capacity, if at all. But what news has been coming in shows a vibrant and determined community, impatient to get on with our favourite activity. One of the trends seems to be that we are taking the opportunity to think more deeply and more creatively about the pursuit of choral music. The summary of a webinar held amongst Western Australian chapter members demonstrates this and Nicholas Bannan's reflections on singing as a fundamental activity necessary for human health should provide food for thought and, possibly, future action in the political realm. I sense that ANCA members everywhere are refusing to take sitting down what seems to be a systematic attack on singing in general.

Most of us will have taken part in the recent survey conducted by ANCA National. Here was another example of the choral community thinking and communicating about our art. The results will surely be important as National Council plans for the future and it is good that we are able to provide an extensive summary of the survey's revelations. But there are other aspects covered by the survey that will help to contribute to thoughtful planning and action – not least the ideas provided about such communications as *Sing Out*.

At the higher levels of our thinking about choral music, the list of papers and presentations submitted for next year's research conference suggest that this conference will be an event that we cannot afford to miss. The range of topics and presenters is mind-boggling!

While I am generally happy with what I am able to offer you in this issue, I am anxious to meet your needs, dear reader. And I can only know what your needs are if you let me know. Please send your ideas, your views, your contributions and, in particular, your images to me at the email address below.

I wish you a safe and joyous holiday season and a successful and song-filled New Year.

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David Hill is currently Musical Director of The Bach Choir, Music Director of Leeds Philharmonic Society, Associate Guest conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and International Chair in Choral Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. He was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers from 2007 to 2017. He is well-known in Australia for his many recordings and for regular conducting engagements here – in particular as Guest Conductor and Patron of NYCA, the National Youth Choir of Australia

Beethoven

The Choral Works

by David Hill

In this auspicious year when we are keen to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Beethoven's birth, it has turned out to be something of a struggle given the global pandemic we are still enduring. We should have been able to hear more of this man's genius: particularly how he changed the course of compositional development for all who followed him and the opportunity to hear more about his life and works. Festivals, the world over, had planned to do that but, with some exceptions, most have had to be cancelled. We have to be content with reading about him, listening to his music, most of which has been recorded magnificently and available at a touch of a button. Of course it isn't the same as experiencing it live, but an alternative. I would urge anyone sceptical about Beethoven's music (and I have some in my own family) to take time, listen to the piano sonatas and late string quartets to hear the voice of a genius.

An element of uncertainty about his music definitely exists amongst the choral community. Quite simply, Beethoven divides opinions as he did when he was alive. He struggled to be accepted in Viennese society and had a capacity to irritate the very people he needed for support. Like J S Bach, who had similar traits, neither composer believed in compromise. Their belief in their own artistry was such that they collected many admirers and supporters alongside equal numbers of sceptics and critics. When it comes to singing, this is particularly true. Beethoven, like Bach, felt the human voice needed to be treated as an equal to any other instrument. All this plays into the constant criticism Beethoven receives from many choral singers. How often have we heard 'his compositional style is too high and demanding' amongst other accusations? Whilst there may be some truth in this, Bach also challenged singers in similar ways including lengthy phrases with no obvious places to breathe and frequently included fast, *coloratura* passages which border on impossible to sing, particularly



in the *B minor Mass*. Whether it is Bach or Beethoven, the output of both composers shows unique minds at work and we must live with their extraordinary levels of creativity.

There are numerous choral works of Beethoven within the primary group of regularly performed works. I do not regard the *9th Symphony* as one of his choral works as it is a symphony with a choral finale. However, it is the one which is most performed and for which he is most famous. It is also the work for which he receives chief criticism from the singers about the unrelentingly high vocal lines and energy levels required to survive a performance. Few would doubt those issues: and yet the way he is attempting to unite humanity using Schiller's *Ode to Joy* with everyone celebrating 'brotherhood', given the state of European history and the numerous conflicts taking place at the time, it was an audacious artistic vision and one which remains as relevant now as when it was first conceived. I had the privilege to prepare it for a number of conductors whilst Artistic Director of the Philharmonia Chorus, London. Perhaps the most moving was working with the great violinist who turned to conducting later in his career, Yehudi Menuhin, who talked about 'unity' and how it had to be understood and expressed



David Hill conducting Bach's 'St Matthew Passion' in the July 2019 'Sydney Inspires' RSCM festival, Sydney Town Hall

within the context of Beethoven's vision. It was, after all, the work chosen to celebrate the demolition of the wall dividing East and West Berlin in November, 1989. Having conducted it on a number of occasions, my previous experience as chorus master only strengthens my view that any successful performance of the final movement will be the enunciation and characterisation of the German text. The words and the music are an intoxicating combination and it is extraordinary to think that by the time it had been composed, (1822-24), Beethoven was completely deaf and would never 'hear' the results of what was in his mind.

I would suggest the choral work most singers aspire to learn is the *Missa Solemnis*.

Written between 1819 and 1823, alongside the *9th Symphony* and *Fidelio*, it is one of his largest works. As with many of his premieres, including the *9th Symphony*, Beethoven insisted on



Beethoven at the first performance of the *9th Symphony*

conducting the first performance. It was in St Petersburg in 1824 and another work he would never hear performed, due to his deafness. This period in his life must have been incredibly frustrating given he had reached the height of his artistic expression, and yet he produced one of the great masterpieces of choral and orchestral literature ever composed. If the *9th Symphony* was thought as difficult for the performers, then the *Missa* contains another level of virtuosity for all involved. The work is a setting of the Latin Mass but not in a way that could be regarded then, or now, as liturgical. Beethoven's view of religion has been described as 'idiosyncratic and somewhat incoherent' (*Grove's Dictionary*). He wasn't much interested in the formal side of religion, though he was brought up a Roman Catholic. Beethoven's God was something personal, to whom he could turn for consolation and forgiveness. He was as likely to sense the presence of God in nature around him as much as in any church or religious context. As someone who embraced the countryside on a regular, if not a daily, basis, the power of the natural world was forever present in his mind and being as a composer: the *6th Symphony* – 'Pastoral' being the most vivid example. The *Missa* is on a scale no one else had conceived previously, lasting around 70 - 80 minutes. Had Mozart completed his 'Great' *C minor Mass*, there may have been closer comparisons to make, but that wasn't to be. Beethoven draws on every aspect of his knowledge and compositional style from the grand, homophonic writing of the opening 'Kyrie' to the hugely demanding fugues in the 'Credo'. I never cease to admire and be moved by the transition from the 'Sanctus' to the 'Benedictus' with the intensity of the lower string writing and all leading to the appearance of the violin solo in dialogue with the entire orchestra, soloists and choir. It is as if Beethoven has moved us into the countryside, displaying the beauty of creation through his sound-world. It is magical.

Beethoven's other choral works are, of course, performed, but with much less frequency than the *Missa* and the *9th Symphony*. Of the two cantatas on the death of the Emperor Joseph II and the accession of Emperor Leopold II composed in 1790, neither has stayed in the choral repertoire. *Meeresstille und glückliche – Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* – is a very evocative setting of words by Goethe. It needs a new edition for it to be more widely appreciated: the choral parts need to be re-set in modern clefs. The work came about as a result of Beethoven and Goethe having met. It is dedicated to the poet and was first performed in 1815. The opening is spell-binding and displaying his skills as able to convey an eerie stillness in the haunting choral opening. Another rarely-performed work is the *Choral Fantasy* first performed in 1808. It was composed as a rousing conclusion to a concert devoted to Beethoven's works. The idea was for all performers to participate in a work especially composed for the occasion. As was so often the case, a lack of rehearsal led to an indifferent launch: indeed, it broke down and had to be re-started. It is difficult to program as it requires soloists, piano, choir and full orchestra. It is more fun than it is successful as it lacks proper structure and coherence. However, its melodic resemblance to the later *9th Symphony* is striking and must have remained with Beethoven as an important influence on him.

Christus am Olberge – Christ on the Mount of Olives is the work I would draw most attention to for anyone wishing to explore what is a relatively unknown masterpiece. Like so many of his works, the critics were mixed about the work when it was first performed in 1803. It requires 3 soloists, several divisions of chorus voices including an 'Angels' Chorus', Soldiers' Chorus' and 'Disciples' Chorus'. It is a portrayal of Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his crucifixion. It is Beethoven's only oratorio and has an intriguing collage of musical ideas. I would describe it as a seminal work in tracing the growth of Beethoven as a composer. His pen is flowing with ideas and definitely foreshadowing what is yet to come. It's time to do it again as far as I am concerned and in a recent performance which Sir Simon Rattle conducted in London, he said 'I think people will feel as I do – why don't we know this piece?' Prophetic words and although any performances planned for this year have been cancelled, it is a work I would urge us all to hear with fresh ears and hopefully perform at some stage.



Beethoven's hearing aids

The *Mass in C* is another work which receives less attention than it deserves. It was composed in 1807 for the Esterhazy family. Their patronage of the arts was famous as was their devotion to Haydn's music: he had composed his late masses in their honour. But by 1802, he was suffering a decline in health and so Beethoven, a former pupil of Haydn's, was offered the commission. Beethoven admitted that this would be a challenging task, following in Haydn's footsteps. As was so often the case, the first performance was not a success, Prince Nikolaus expressing his disdain directly to Beethoven. Charles Rosen in *The Classical Style* called the episode Beethoven's 'most humiliating failure'. Rosen accepts, however, the work was innovative in trying to move away from the classical formulas of Haydn and Mozart towards a new approach to setting the text and therefore misunderstood. As with the *Missa*, Beethoven did not view the work as liturgical – unlike the settings of Haydn and Mozart. For most, even enlightened clergy, the *Mass in C* borders on being too long. It is good to know that it is occasionally sung liturgically and I completely concur with Michael Moore's view that 'while the mass is often overshadowed by the immense *Missa Solemnis*, written some fifteen years earlier, it has a directness and an emotional content that the *Missa* sometimes lacks.' Beethoven liked the work, irrespective of how it was first received and one can't help but sense that it became the template for the *Missa Solemnis* all those years later.



David Hill conducting Bach's 'St Matthew Passion' in the July 2019 'Sydney Inspires' RSCM festival, Sydney Town Hall



Tony Way is Director of Music at Melbourne's historic St Francis' Church, running a large-scale music program that includes the performance of orchestral masses. For over 25 years he has written about classical music for a number of publications, including *The Age*, *Limelight* and *24 Hours*. His compositions have been published both in Australia and the USA. He is a member of the Australian Academy of Liturgy.

From the heart – may it go again – to the heart!

Recordings of Beethoven's Choral Music

by Tony Way

Beethoven's famous inscription on the score of his *Missa Solemnis* is an apt title for this article; not only because it sums up the artistic intent of his music, but because it is also an expression of our deepest aspirations as choral musicians. As we wait for the time when we can again sing from the heart and to the heart, we can derive solace from Beethoven's story and inspiration from recordings of his music. In this Beethoven anniversary year (perhaps with some extra time on our hands), we have a unique opportunity to discover or rediscover some wonderful works and performances.

In this exploration of Beethoven's choral music, the major works are treated chronologically, followed by a brief consideration of some of his lesser known works.

Christ on the Mount of Olives, Op. 85

Beethoven's only oratorio, *Christus am Ölberge* (*Christ on the Mount of Olives*), was composed in 1803 and delves into the mind of Jesus as he contemplates and ultimately accepts his passion. Such melancholy and introspection find resonance in Beethoven's personal life, as it follows a year after he had poignantly revealed his struggle with deafness in the now famous Heiligenstadt Testament.

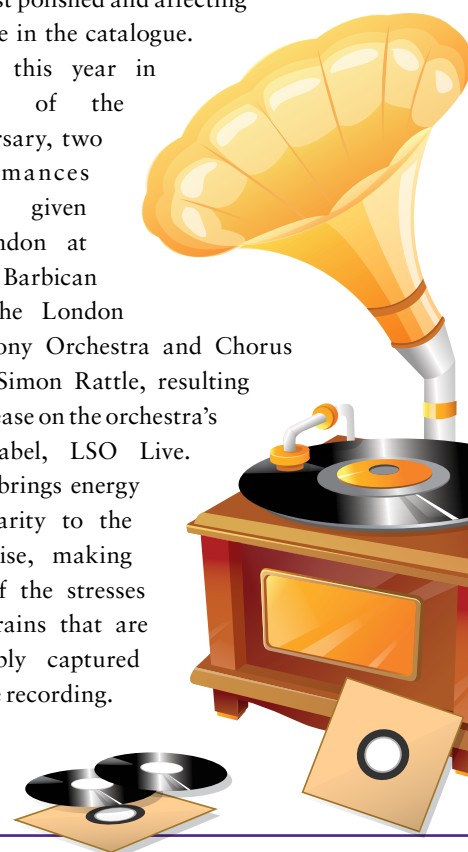
Reversing the tradition of chant and polyphonic settings of the passion, Jesus' role is given to a tenor while Peter is sung by a bass. The role of the chorus is not arduous; the full chorus only singing twice, while a male 'chorus of soldiers' is deployed at certain points. The work climaxes with the so-called 'Hallelujah Chorus' – the word 'Hallelujah' only appearing in the English translation – a favourite with choirs in the

nineteenth century and a chorus well worth performing as a stand-alone work.

Performances and recordings of this oratorio are somewhat rare. Apart from the questionable literary merits of the original German libretto by Franz Xaver Huber, which Beethoven disliked, and which was subsequently reworked by Christian Schreiber, the music itself has had a somewhat lukewarm reception. There are some charming arias, but the general impression is that the work's musical parts do not add up to more than the sum of its whole.

Even so, the work has been recorded by some celebrated tenors, including Fritz Wunderlich, Nicolai Gedda, Plácido Domingo and Australian, Steve Davislim. Gedda's 1970 recording (now available on a Warner download) arguably remains the most polished and affecting of those in the catalogue.

Earlier this year in honour of the anniversary, two performances were given in London at the Barbican with the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus under Simon Rattle, resulting in a release on the orchestra's own label, LSO Live. Rattle brings energy and clarity to the enterprise, making light of the stresses and strains that are inevitably captured in a live recording.



Mass in C, Op. 86

Although Beethoven's initial relationship with Joseph Haydn was somewhat rocky, there is no doubt the older composer's music did instil not a little awe in the mind of his onetime student and exert a considerable influence over his work. After Haydn's death in 1802, Prince Nicholas Esterházy II continued the practice of commissioning a Mass in honour of his wife's name day. Haydn had produced his 'big six' Masses for this occasion, and in 1807 it was Beethoven's turn to fill these rather formidable musical shoes.

The prince did not care for the resulting *Mass in C* (possibly because the premiere was under-rehearsed) but Beethoven held the Mass in high esteem, and the critic E. T. A. Hoffmann regarded it as 'the expression of a childlike serene mind'. Today we can appreciate the work as a highly effective and creative setting of the liturgical texts. It is also an attractive performance proposition for those choirs who do not have the time, resources or indeed the stamina to contemplate a performance of the *Missa Solemnis*.

A number of attractive and historically informed performances are available on disc. Amongst these are accounts by Richard Hickox and Collegium Musicum 90 (Chandos), John Eliot Gardiner with the Monteverdi Choir and the Orchestra Révolutionnaire et Romantique (DG), and Matthew Best directing his Corydon Singers (Hyperion). Each of these in its own particular way captures the freshness of Beethoven's conception.

Choral Fantasy, Op. 80

Considered as a sort of prototype for the choral conclusion of *Symphony No. 9*, the *Choral Fantasy* was hastily composed in 1808 to form the triumphant conclusion to a Beethoven benefit concert. One hopes the seats were comfortable, as the program already included *Symphony No. 5*, *Symphony No. 6*, *Piano Concerto No. 4* and excerpts of the *Mass in C*! As it happened the Fantasy had to be restarted, as Beethoven countermanded his own instructions by repeating a variation. The concluding paean to human solidarity and the arts echoes the later Ode to Joy, and comes close to being as exhilarating as the finale to the Choral Symphony.

Requiring a brilliant fusion of solo piano, chorus and orchestra, the Choral Fantasy is given a fine performance by the Berlin Philharmonic under Daniel Barenboim. Visit <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/home> for further information.

Symphony No. 9, Op. 125

Much has been written about this most famous work, a work that acquired a legendary status with its very first performance in 1824, when, as we know, the then profoundly deaf composer and conductor had to be alerted to the audience's tumultuous ovation. The symphony remains emblematic of humanity's deepest longings and highest aspirations. Often performed at watershed moments in history, the Choral Symphony has received countless fine recordings. Listeners will have their own favourites, but here a few of my own.



Von Karajan's classic 1962 recording (DG) remains an impressive distillation of his thoughts about Beethoven and his force of personality makes for an unforgettable performance. Leonard Bernstein's famous 1989 account (Euroarts DVD) made as the Berlin Wall came down is notable for his substitution of the word 'Freiheit' (freedom) for Schiller's 'Freude' (joy) in the choral finale. While his personality is ever present, Bernstein's is a convincing and memorable musical moment.

Historically informed performances are also numerous, amongst them are polished performances by Gardiner (DG Archiv), Norrington (originally EMI, now Warner) and Harnoncourt (originally Teldec). The Norrington version features Australian soprano, Yvonne Kenny.

Amongst Australian performances, try that of the Australian World Orchestra in 2011 under Alexander Briger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxoy0lNgX3w>

Missa Solemnis, Op. 123

Already referred to, Beethoven's famous inscription on the manuscript of the *Missa Solemnis* is surely the key to understanding this, one of his most intensely personal outpourings. Yet there is no denying that the work is conceived on a massive, monumental scale: one commentator describes it standing out 'as though carved in granite'. The composer was well aware of Bach's *Mass in B minor* and was doubtless inspired to offer his patron, Archduke Rudolph, something equally grand. When the Mass was eventually finished in 1827

(well after the original deadline) the result was a complex, richly varied masterpiece that challenged interpreters to hold its exterior grandeur and inner conviction in creative tension.

Like much great music, the *Missa Solemnis* admits a variety of performance styles. Of earlier, more 'operatic' interpretations, Herbert von Karajan recorded numerous notable performances. A Salzburg performance from 1979 is captured on DVD with soloists including Anna Tomowa-Sintow and Jose van Dam (DG), while on disc one can hear him working with such stellar sopranos as Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Leontyne Price (Warner).

On the historically informed side of the ledger, John Eliot Gardiner leads the way. In his most recent recording (SDG), Gardiner's approach is similar to that of his earlier account: to uphold Beethoven's very thoughtful treatment of the texts and to apply performance practices that point out the composer's rich homage to his musical antecedents, particularly Haydn and Bach. Flowing tempos not only allude to the past, but also allow the visceral, personal nature of the work to come to the surface. While Gardiner encourages constant forward movement, there is no sense of undue haste or undervalued solemnity. Fitting on to one disc, this live performance given at the Barbican in October 2012 clocks in at just under 70 minutes.

The Monteverdi Choir respond magnificently to the huge challenges of the vocal writing. Clarity of diction and instrumental texture give the words enormous dramatic impact. Contrapuntal sections, such as the concluding fugue in the Gloria are dispatched with dazzling agility. The soloists are a well-blended quartet and avoid any operatic excesses.

Playing with enormous commitment, the members of the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique give a freshness and vitality to all the orchestral dimensions of the score. Their period instruments also do much to enhance Gardiner's conception.

Gardiner brings the whole work together with a rare ability to balance the bigger picture and the details into an uplifting whole. It does indeed go to the heart.

Other Works

In the course of his relatively short but prolific career, Beethoven composed a number of other choral works that rarely surface in performance. Perhaps best known is the cantata, *Meerstille und glückliche Fahrt* (Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage), Op. 112, a setting of two poems by Goethe. As for the *Mass in C*, Hickox, Gardiner and Best all provide good performances. More obscure are two imperial cantatas – one on the death of Joseph II, and one on the accession of Leopold II – and some music written in 1814 for the Congress of Vienna. All these works have been recorded for the sake of completeness and can be found on your preferred streaming service.

Like most composers of his time, Beethoven responded creatively to economic impulse, and while there were some commissions for choral music, this area of activity was not to feature as prominently in his output as it did for Bach, or even Haydn. Even so, we are left with some truly great choral music which will continue to challenge and inspire musicians to perform from the heart and to the heart.

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- ON STAGE IN PRAGUE**
NOVEMBER 10 - 13, 2022
Registration Deadline: June 19, 2022
- ON STAGE IN FLORENCE**
MAY 19 - 22, 2022
Registration Deadline: January 16, 2022
- ON STAGE IN LISBON**
SEPTEMBER 9 - 12, 2022
Registration Deadline: April 18, 2022
- ON STAGE IN ALBANIA**
JUNE 8 - 12, 2022
Registration Deadline: 17 January, 2022

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A Choral Curiosity

by Noel Ancell

Appearing in the *Church Anthem Book* (OUP, 1933) as “The Heavens Declare the Creator’s Glory”, Beethoven’s “Die Himmel rühmen des Ewigen Ehre” was my introduction to Beethoven’s music for voice. The piece was not intended for choir, but was the fourth in a cycle of lieder with texts by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (Opus 48). As a unison choral song, however, it works well. It is dramatic (Beethoven marked it “majestic and solemn”), and stirring, with a strong melody and arresting harmonies in the (piano) accompaniment.

The German text is based on Psalm 19. The *Church Anthem Book* text is probably by Revd Dr John Troutbeck and may be considered a little archaic, but a little searching will provide a number of other translations into English and several arrangements – some for SATB choirs – including Virgil Thompson’s *The heavens are telling*.

16
(Orig. C dur.)

Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur.
Gellert.
Beethoven, Op. 48. No 4.

Majestätisch und erhaben.

Die Himmel rüh-mendes E-wigen Eh-re, ihr Schall pflanzt
seinen Na-men fort; ihn rühmt der Erdkreis, ihn prei-sen die Mee-re, ver-nimm, o Mensch, ihr
göttlich Wort!
Wer trägt der Himmel unzählbare Sterne? Wer
führt die Sonn' aus ih-rem Zelt? Sie kommt und leuchtet und lacht uns von fer-ne, und
läuft den Weg gleich als ein Held, und läuft den Weg gleich als ein Held.

6.
cresc.
pp
cresc.
sf
p
sf

Edition Peters
8861

The score above comes courtesy of
International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP)

What we learnt from the period of Covid-19: the WA story

by Nicholas Bannan, Nikki Sullivan, Tim Fisher, Matthew Clements, Anette Kerkovius

The effects of the coronavirus have severely inhibited the practice of singing internationally, especially within the field of choral music, in which it was initially declared that the act of singing spread aerosols more thoroughly than any other activity, and that the many older singers in our ensembles would be especially vulnerable. Some months later, after periods of curtailed activity leavened by 'Zoom rehearsals' and virtual recordings, choral singing is beginning to reappear, at least in locations in which the virus has been eliminated, and under responsible conditions intended to reduce risk.

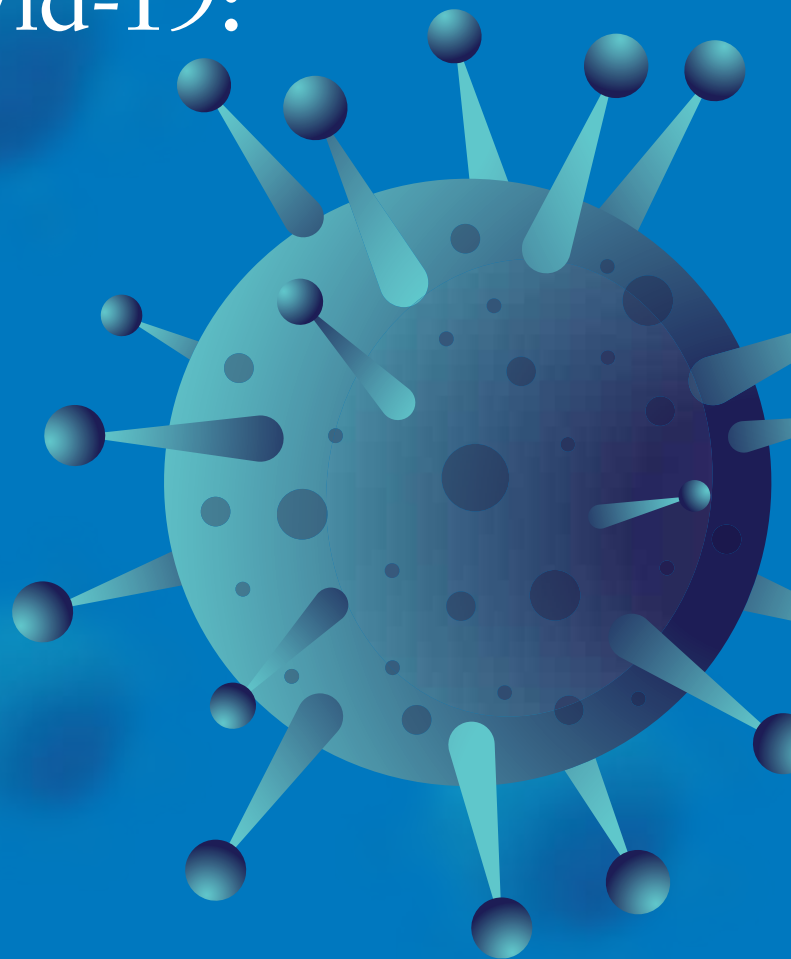
In July, ANCA WA held a series of meetings in collaboration with our friends in the organisation Songfest, who had conducted a survey on the responses of choirs to the initial lockdown protocols. Two of these were mounted as webinars, the first, on which this article mainly reflects, designed to share perceptions of what each other was doing; the second to develop choir policies including statements to inform their members and the owners of the premises in which they rehearse.

...sadly, several had ceased operation altogether...

Matthew Clements and Tim Fisher reported on the mixed position choirs were adopting at the time. Sadly, several had ceased operation altogether, while others had suspended activity, in some cases because they were unconfident that members would enjoy the frustration of remote sessions. The great majority of those that continued in operation found ways of employing Zoom, either by singing along unmuted to backing tracks or to their own or others' recordings. Some reported occasionally tuning chords unmuted in order to preserve a sense of interaction, however limited; and there was some use of breakout groups, either based on sections or randomly, permitting more intimate social contact.

Comments on members' responses included:

- There is considerable fear of infection and a strong desire to protect those most vulnerable
- ... the current committee wishes to resign, and we are yet to elect a new one
- ... we lost 2/3rds of the choir at rehearsals
- There was a complete loss of revenue to the choir from concerts and fundraising activities
- All engagements at nursing and retirement homes were cancelled



- Dreadful withdrawal symptoms due to lack of singing
- No festivals or live performances ... we're struggling so much without the accolades!

...dreadful withdrawal symptoms...

Planning for the future, however, included more positive impressions; that choirs would continue as best they could, and bounce back eventually:

- Approx 70% of members continued to pay their term fees
- It was a wonderful opportunity to stay connected socially with members
- ... singing online allowed those who normally sing quietly to SING OUT loudly!

Choirs valued help with developing risk assessments and the interpretation of Health Department policy, as well as devising programs for a future in which things might improve. They sought:

- A system of safely rehearsing and performing
- Scientific consensus on aerosol spread and choir safety...
- ... encouragement that it is OK to sing
- A collective purchase of Choir-Friendly PPE...
- How to keep on singing when community transmission of the virus appears in Perth

- Some help to make a COVID plan is probably the most useful thing...

Similar considerations characterised Nikki Sullivan's report to the first Webinar on vocal activity in schools. She stressed that the students belong to the school and that the school must have an agreed Covid-19 Plan. Choir directors then follow the school plan and directives, knowing they will be supported in their decisions and requests.

...sectional rehearsals were proving to be popular...

In late July in WA these had comprised:

- Providing a rehearsal space where there is enough room for appropriate social distancing, e.g. an undercover area (in warmer weather); gymnasium; lecture theatre; dance studio; drama studio;
- Providing hand sanitiser and spray sanitiser with paper towels;
- Having a policy on school attendance: where a student is unwell requesting that they do not attend school if they are unwell and/or showing any cold or flu symptoms.

In consequence some larger choirs had not yet resumed full rehearsals but anticipated doing so in Term 3. Sectional rehearsals were proving to be popular with both directors and singers where a larger space was unavailable. For experienced senior choirs, a way of continuing was to arrange cross-sectional rehearsals with a small group of singers from each voice part. Sharing copies could not be allowed.

Directors needed to maintain distance from singers and ensure that air currents from fans and air-conditioners were not directing the flow of air towards them. Warm-ups needed to avoid the use of fricatives (e.g. F, V, Th, S) and lip-trills, though tongue trills are okay while humming and 'oo' is particularly good.

In schools, the cleaning staff clean the chairs at the end of the day, and sometimes during the day. It is advisable to wipe the music stands and piano keyboard before and after rehearsal (ready for the next group to use). Staggered entry and exit to and from the rehearsal space should be arranged. Students use hand sanitiser at entry and exit.

...excitement bordering on euphoria...

In support of those unable to attend, create a Zoom (or similar) meeting for the rehearsal, invite them to participate while muted. They can then sing with the whole choir, hear discussion, pointers from the director, rehearse problem spots with the choir section, etc.

Current developments

At the time of writing, Western Australia has for some months found itself in the fortunate position of having no community transmission of the virus.

The State Government took early and radical steps akin to those in New Zealand: restricted and controlled immigration from overseas and other States; compulsory, managed quarantine; internal restriction on movement, which limited infection mostly to Fremantle docks and a relatively small number of air passengers, and protection for the remote areas of the wheatbelt and north, especially the aboriginal communities.

By the end of July, smaller choirs were able to rehearse again, and under carefully arranged separation, to sing in churches and in the open air.

Larger choirs with sufficiently spacious venues began singing with the required spacing (social distancing). Interestingly, many reported that, after a period of getting used to the difficulties of coordination and blend, experience of these conditions contributed to enhanced resonance and sensitivity – a silver lining that may not have been anticipated.

Overall, choirs of all kinds able to return to some kind of normality report an excitement bordering on euphoria that this meaningful activity has become possible again.



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Nicholas Bannan is Associate Professor of Music at UWA, where he directs The Winthrop Singers. He has published three books on music education and edited the volume Music, Language and Human Evolution for OUP in 2012. He won the Fribourg Festival Prize for Sacred Music with his Magnificat in 1986, a Radcliffe Award for his First String Quartet (1981), and a Holst Foundation Commission for his Second String Quartet

The WA Story – Part 2

by Nicholas Bannan

Nicholas Bannan's contribution to the first WA Webinar considered impressions from colleagues around the world, including the news that research projects were underway such as that conducted by voice surgeon Declan Costello in London. He reflected:

It is vitally important that policy applied to choral singing at the time of Covid-19 takes note of the value to human beings of exercising their capacity to sing ... as much as it does the responsible measures required to prevent the spread of this terrible disease. I would therefore like to begin by voicing the concern that some political and media commentary appears wilfully ignorant of the nature and value of singing, if not openly hostile to what is actually a universal practice across all human societies rather than the obsession of a small proportion of people that can be lightly dismissed without consequence.

...some political and media commentary appears wilfully ignorant of the nature and value of singing...

Evolutionary studies of the ability to sing suggest that it evolved prior to language, and a recapitulation of this sequence can be heard in the early vocalisations of infants, responding to their carers in pitched vocal sounds as the basis for the eventual acquisition of speech.

At the other end of the life cycle, people with dementia may entirely lose the ability to speak but retain their capacity for song. This can be exploited in rekindling or retaining vocal communication, between a patient and their partner – as well as in the social uplift provided by group singing.

If it appears perverse to commence consideration of the nature of singing through reference to two subsets of the population not usually associated with choral performance, my intention is to illustrate that song offers lifelong companionship to every human, conferred

in our genetic inheritance. The ability to sing well, and to enjoy doing so, is released where the family, educational experience, or the communal environment (whether it be church or pub) provides the appropriate stimulus to participation.

...song offers lifelong companionship to every human...

So, in preparing this response to the Songfest questionnaire, I wanted to remind a predominantly choral audience of the wider contexts in which singing needs to occur if choirs themselves are going to prove sustainable and not be viewed as a minority pursuit.

Two former students are practising as qualified Music Therapists in Perth hospitals. Singing to and with patients is essential to the capacity for therapeutic and palliative care they have trained to provide. They are still employing singing in their repertoire of interaction, responsibly applying the same kinds of spacing and protection that we are discussing for choirs. But I find it encouraging, even exemplary, that they have continued while many of our choirs have had to stop.

Much of my work in music education has been as part of an international network advocating for the benefits to every child of well-taught vocal and musical experience. Again, we face the problematic field of whether governments can demand the return of all children to school, as well as the considerable difficulty of imposing spatial separation and stringent hygiene practices on toddlers. But what we also need to consider is the potential retardation of sensory-motor and auditory integration that singing provides, both in its consequences for producing a generation of children less able to sing, and for the effects this may have on language skills, mathematics, and social intelligence. All of these are, by the way, extensively documented in a literature that politicians ought to read!

My colleague Robin Dunbar in Oxford has measured the health benefits of group

singing and found it uniquely able to reduce pain thresholds. Other projects around the world reported in the excellent book published by UWA neurologist Alan Harvey* illustrate that singing boosts the immune system and reduces stress levels. So, before we commence our defence of singing from the condemnation of ignorant journalists, we need to place it within this wider context of normality and the good that it achieves.

*...singing boosts the immune system
and reduces stress levels...*

A passing remark, then, regarding government responsibilities should Covid-19 set in for a long duration. I have seen online, simultaneous music teaching, including choral rehearsal, in widely separated communities in Brazil, Canada and Iowa.

This is because their wi-fi networks are connected by fibre-optic cabling: technology turned down by the Abbott government. A future that requires an increase in remote learning and interaction will demand an improved infrastructure.

So, we need to present this vital element of balance: the principal that singing is too important to be placed in the box of what we should be told not to do. **Yes, we must face the bottom line: that we adopt measures which minimise singing together as a means of transmitting the virus. But we need to achieve this through an informed position that also represents the dangers of not singing.**

**Music, Evolution, and the Harmony of Souls,
Oxford University Press, 2017.*

Call for Articles!

***The ANCA editor is interested in receiving articles
of interest to the choral world.***

Examples of topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Articles on a Specific Issue of Choral Music
- Choral News from both Inside and Outside of Australia
- Vocal Pedagogy and Choral Singing
- Interview with Renowned Choral Conductors and Composers
- Choral Technique
- Repertoire for Choir

Contact the Editor,
Noel Ancell OAM
for more details.



ANCA Survey Commentary (2020)

The ANCA 2020 Membership survey offered valuable feedback to our State and Territory Chapters and National Council. We received 568 responses for Part 1 and 377 responses for Part 2. Membership responses accurately matched the overall percentage of members' locations: NSW/ACT (38.5%), VICT/TAS (23.5%), QLD/NT (21%), SA (11%), WA (6%).

About our members (Part 1)

We learnt a lot about the members who responded to the survey.

- The majority of our members over 50 years old (78%) with 1.2% under 25.
- Our membership is divided between Choral Directors (40%) and Choir Members (42%) with the remaining members (18%) choir administrators.

Community Choirs are the most represented choral activity (58%) followed by semi-professional choirs where members are auditioned (22%). Primary and Secondary schools represent 13% of our members. Most choirs have a maximum size of fifty singers.

Half of the respondents, have one main choral activity. A fifth of the respondents are involved with a second choral group as a Choir Director or Member. Interestingly, the same amount of people are involved in a third choral group in the same way. For those involved in Faith & Worship or a Primary/Secondary choir, this is usually their third choral activity.

About the Current Moment: The Top Three challenges

Our members (377) told us the top three challenges facing choirs before COVID-19 were:

- Membership numbers
- Funding & Financial Stability
- Motivation, Commitment & Rehearsal Attendance

1. Membership numbers and retention (36%)

By far the most concerning challenge in the survey results, was in relation to building and maintaining choir membership. This included a strong emphasis on attracting new members, particularly men and younger singers. Members are concerned about falling numbers affecting their group's financial viability, difficulties of balance and finding enough people to fill committee roles. Instability and retention issues appeared to

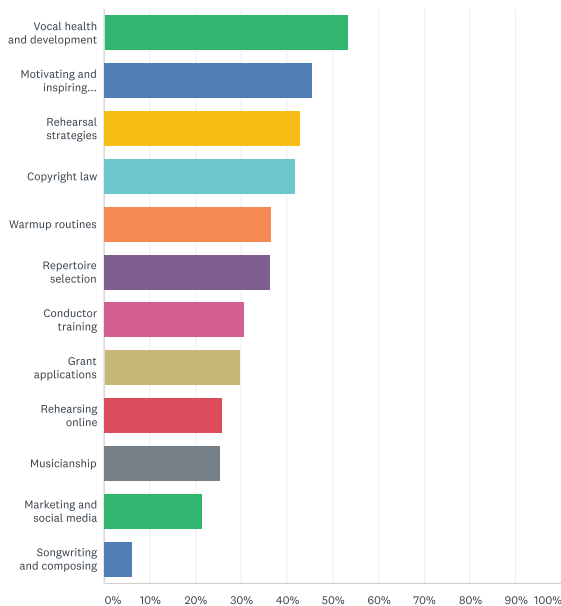
correlate strongly with motivation and consistency of attendance at rehearsals.

2. Funding & Financial Stability (25%)

Financial pressures on choirs seem to be a considerable concern. There are very wide-ranging issues – from being able to afford a conductor or accompanists to attracting new members so the group can stay financially viable. Budgeting for music, the cost of performances and purchasing scores as well as limited options for grants and fundraising were captured in the survey.

For ANCA training and workshops, which of the following professional development areas are of most value to you or your choristers? (select multiple options)

Answered: 377 Skipped: 191



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Vocal health and development	53.32% 201
Motivating and inspiring choirs	45.62% 172
Rehearsal strategies	42.97% 162
Copyright law	41.91% 158
Warmup routines	36.60% 138
Repertoire selection	36.34% 137
Conductor training	30.77% 116
Grant applications	29.71% 112
Rehearsing online	25.99% 98
Musicianship	25.46% 96
Marketing and social media	21.49% 81
Songwriting and composing	6.37% 24
Total Respondents: 377	

3. Motivation, Commitment & Rehearsal Attendance (22%)

Surprisingly strong themes included concerns around consistency of attendance, motivation and engagement of group members and absenteeism. Commitment to weekly rehearsals and balancing time demands creates a lack of consistency in members' commitment to rehearsals and performances. Difficulty in maintaining momentum, keeping everyone happy and attention to home practice were raised. Email communication, raising musical standards and improving vocal quality were raised as challenges when rehearsal attendance fluctuates.

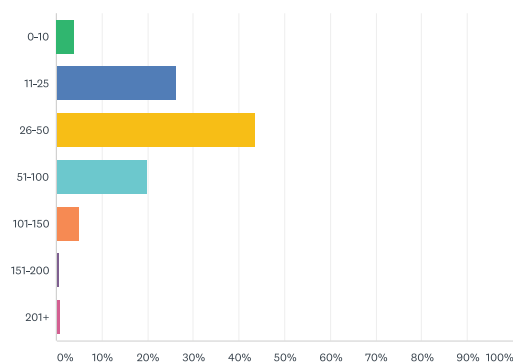
Looking deeper at underlying causes

Repertoire (20%) & Learning, Skills & Musicianship (10%)

Selecting and finding appropriate music and arrangements appears to be highly linked to motivation and engagements concerns. Balancing the desire to sing new and exciting repertoire with the increased costs of purchasing scores as well as choosing music to cater for differentiation and skill levels is highlighted in the responses. This affects formulating choral programs to suit varied musical genres and getting a good balance between repertoire from the historical canon and new works. Providing rehearsal files, particularly new repertoire and selecting the right repertoire for the ensemble were raised as areas for improvement.

How many choristers are in your main choral activity?

Answered: 568 Skipped: 0



There was a wide range of issues associated with learning, skills and musicianship. These largely fell into these areas:

- Singing in parts
- Intonation and singing in tune
- Reading music notation
- Vocal technique and placement

The relationship between repertoire and learning skills was not well established in the survey.

Recommendation:

It may be worth revisiting repertoire by choosing simpler material and building up the group's technical skill level. Many developmental growth activities benefit from unison singing, with good harmonic support provided with and without piano accompaniment.

Membership demographics (23%)

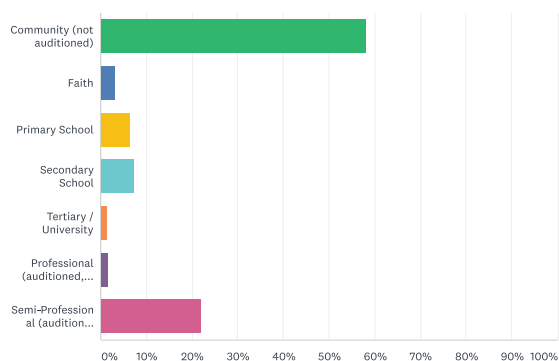
Where groups are particularly struggling with balance (15%), this is mostly arising from a shortage of male singers, particularly tenors but represented in all voice parts. Attracting younger singers (6%) seems a prominent concern from a sustainability perspective, but it is good to notice that issues associated with the aging voice (2%) comprised a very low consideration for survey respondents.

Recommendation:

A complex problem, this is most likely to be the result of a break in the pipeline between

What type of choir is your main choral activity?

Answered: 568 Skipped: 0



singing in schools and youth programs and reaching community choirs. Developing a dedicated youth-strategy or starting a feeder choral group may provide opportunities for addressing some of these concerns outside of an educational content.

Audiences (13%) & Performance Opportunities (6%)

Nearly a fifth of respondents felt attracting audiences and building performance opportunities were considerable areas for growth. Diminishing audiences, possibly due to an ageing audience and competing with other choirs for slots in the concert calendar in areas with limited audiences to attract were raised. Publicity, promotion and raising the public profile of groups might be key indicators of success in this regard.

Recommendation:

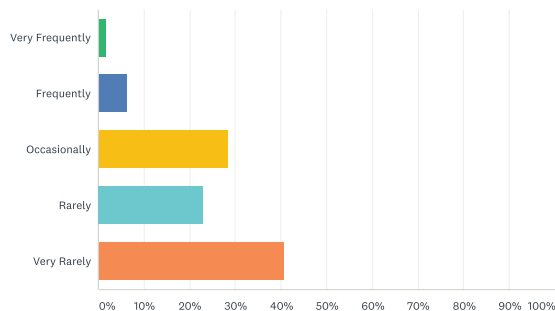
Coordinating with other vocal groups in the local community in terms of planning and repertoire is the most obvious and potentially challenging recommendation. This requires less of a competitive approach to programming. Groups may like to consider combining with other groups for larger concerts, splitting the concert production costs.

Rehearsal Venues (17%) and Committee Administration (12%)

Accessible, affordable, quality performance and rehearsal venues came through as a clear theme, including the costs associated with venues. Finding a bigger venue with storage for risers, choirs becoming too large for available rehearsal spaces and good acoustics in large venues were reported. There was a very

How often do you attend in ANCA activities?

Answered: 377 Skipped: 191



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very Frequently	1.59% 6
Frequently	6.37% 24
Occasionally	28.38% 107
Rarely	23.08% 87
Very Rarely	40.58% 153
TOTAL	377

wide range of concerns related to committee administration. These largely fell within the areas of

- communication and organisation
- finances and marketing
- sustainability of committee members
- group dynamics and discipline

This is clearly an area that would benefit from some targeted attention in terms of the behind-the-scenes processes, policies and governance that contribute to the overall organisational culture of ensembles.

Recommendation:

The right blend of personality, skills and time availability is the elusive holy grail of committee membership. Establishing and refining policies and procedures can be time consuming up front, but pay significant dividends in the longer term. Focus on identifying one or two areas for improvement, identifying current strengths and weakness in each issue, then trial various possibilities. Trying to learn how to work as a team is equally important as the tasks at hand.

Musical Directors (8%) & Accompanists (2%)

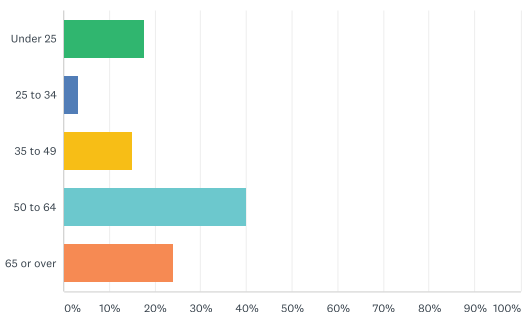
Ten percent of respondents raised concerns about the availability of quality Choir Directors, skilled musical directors and accompanists. Finding and retaining or replacing a good musical director also scored as serious concerns.

Recommendation:

Succession planning relies on understanding the personal qualities of the right fit with

What is the average age of your choristers is your main choral activity?

Answered: 568 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 25	17.61% 100
25 to 34	3.17% 18
35 to 49	15.14% 86
50 to 64	39.96% 227
65 or over	24.12% 137
TOTAL	568

the technical demands of the role. The right blend of personality, musical skills, time availability and empathy with members is complex. Preparing the search ahead of time, building up temporary leadership from within the group membership and splitting the role during transitions can create a smoother leadership succession.

Where to next?

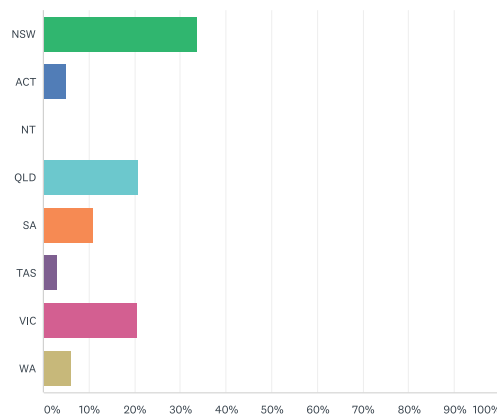
As ANCA prepares to celebrate its 30th birthday next year, we are also preparing a new strategic plan for the next 3 to 5 years. The survey feedback provides an excellent guide to how we can tailor our offerings, resources and support into areas that will make a difference to all contexts.

We'll be considering:

- Building Membership – what's worked for others when times were hard
- Motivation and Engagement – is it time for a refresh and rethink on approaching rehearsals
- Repertoire – why it really, really matters so much more than you might think
- Committee governance, finances and the basics of building sustainable infrastructure

What state are you located in?

Answered: 568 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
NSW	33.63%	191
ACT	4.93%	28
NT	0.00%	0
QLD	20.77%	118
SA	10.92%	62
TAS	2.99%	17
VIC	20.60%	117
WA	6.16%	35
TOTAL		568

- Musicianship approaches – how we can help you get past some of the basics that might be slowing down your rehearsals.

From the WA Chapter

by Angela Currie, WA Chapter Secretary

Pandemic? What? Like really?

And so said all of us as best laid plans for a plethora of workshops, including our carefully chosen International presenter South African Ronel Laidlaw, were laid aside to await plan B for 2020.

How did we reach plan B? Well, enter that virtual world of emails, phone conversations and the newly discovered skill of Zoom meetings. This allowed each of us, gently guided by our inspiring & enabling president Anette Kerkovius, to find our individual strengths and collective skills, and come up with a new direction for our WA branch that would never have otherwise been discovered.

In Collaboration with 'Songfest' we were collectively inspired to consider how to counteract negativity around singing in a 'COVID World', what can we share, how can we help? A survey was sent out, a myriad of questions came back and as a result two webinars entitled 'Strategies for returning to singing with and without COVID' and 'writing your COVID Safety plan' were offered and received very positively. Following on from



Darren Wicks



Mark O'Leary

that, two inspiring Webinars were offered from Mark O'Leary, entitled 'The Importance of Variety in Choral Rehearsals', and Darren Wicks, entitled 'Working with choirs in the online space'. This new virtual world, while slightly confronting with all it entails, allowed attendance from far and wide despite COVID, thus bringing the community closer together in many ways.

Also during this time, we have been reminded of the homegrown musical talent from our West and from that 'Growing our Own' was born where plans to delve into the world of our very own Choral composers are leading us into the return of face-to-face.

All in all, we have learned to become fluid with our thoughts and plans. It's been tough, each of us has experienced exhaustion and discouragement in different ways at different times. All of us were caught up in this storm experiencing our own journey, but, despite that a programme was drawn up, new contacts were made to a wider audience than ever imagined and a journey into the unknown became one that allowed us to see new horizons.



Judith Clingan AM, BA, Dip Mus Ed (Hungary) is a composer, performer, conductor and music educator based in Canberra, who has devoted her life to helping others world-wide enjoy singing as much as she does. She currently directs Wayfarers Australia.

Sing We Must!

experiences under Covid in Canberra and nearby

by Judy Clingan

I consider myself very lucky that the huge environmental-awareness concert I spent all January and February planning and rehearsing just squeaked in before lockdown commenced (15th March). Then followed several weeks of voluntary (actually, urged by my daughter!) inactivity – no singing, no recorder playing, no teaching, no meeting up with friends – but quite a lot of gardening, darning and painting! Then once term 2 got under way, I decided that it was imperative that the children I normally teach weekly (as a volunteer) at the new little Steiner school in Cooma, and who were now being schooled online, be reminded somehow of the pleasures of making music. Accordingly, I undertook to zoom or ring every child from grade 3 to grade 6, once a week each. (It's a small school with composite classes– so only about 25 children!)

And so began about five weeks of an exhausting timetable: two or three hours every school morning I assisted my two grandchildren with their online lessons (while their parents, who are both high school teachers, got on with their work). And then for another four or five hours on most days I would zoom my Cooma students. While there are of course

drawbacks to online music lessons, I discovered quite a few pluses: e.g., the children who hope to slip under the radar in a class lesson have absolutely no way to escape when they are one-to-one! I discovered quite a few beautiful singers who had been previously undetected; I also discovered who had been paying attention in musicianship classes! And the children who often end up droning in class because the key of a song being sung feels too high, were able to choose their key and show me that they had actually learnt the song! And, of course, another plus was becoming slightly acquainted with each child's home, family, pets and favourite pastimes!

Then, towards the end of term 2, the Alpine School resumed face-to-face lessons. I was delighted when we were all able to meet together and sing the winter songs we had all been practising on zoom! But this joy was short-lived! Shortly after our return to school at the beginning of term 3, we were told that group singing and group recorder playing were now forbidden. However, I plugged on. With the kindy-1-2 composite class I sang a song while the class teacher led the children in hand gestures appropriate to the words, and of course we moved – dancing and acting and using percussion.





An interesting extra was the week's residential multi-arts camp I ran in an old farm south of Canberra, for 50 children and adults. We sang happily every day, as the ACT Covid situation was pretty stable by then. Lucky us!

My own singing life in Canberra has gradually woken up as the ACT has had no cases for quite a few months now, my adult Wayfarers groups have been meeting now for about five weeks – usually no more than six people at a time. I have also recently started a Wayfarers Family Choir about 15 people in family clusters (with children aged 5 to 12) have been meeting in a largish room, enjoying folk songs and rounds. A group I sing in, which unfortunately meets in premises owned by a NSW university, has been less lucky: rules are much more strictly enforced according to Sydney regulations, which has seemed a little severe, given the ACT situation.

And so life goes on. I devoutly hope that with the passing of each week our various governments around Australia will realise that in fact the amount of aerosols ejected by sweating footballers in a scrum must be at least as much as what comes out of my timid singers mouths. I am planning a choral and music theatre tour of the South coast for January – we will sing, even if by necessity outdoors, spaced accordingly! But sing we must!

I also began to use a few Kodaly pitch hand-signs, as well as rhythmic gestures which I have evolved over a few decades. With the two older classes I used felt notes on felt boards for a song which I would sing alone; we also used rhythm cards on the floor for rhythmic dictations. And one by one children would meet me in the corridor and play their recorder or guitar for me. Then just about a week ago we learnt that NSW primary schools are now permitted to sing and play recorders in groups! Hurrah!

From Tasmania

Di O'Toole, who contributed the article "Cygnets Singers" in our last edition, has been back in touch. In addition to the news below, she has shared with us a little exercise for warming up – her words and Beethoven's immortal theme from the *9th Symphony*.

She reports:

We're back to weekly rehearsals with as many as want to come back at this point – a bit over half, which is just as well as with the current distancing requirement we can't accommodate any more, really. There's a bit of wiggle room but not much, and anyone who didn't indicate a month ago that they wanted to resume immediately knows they can't just turn up.

We're hoping the 1.5 rule might move to 1 meter, which would mean we could put out the call for some more. As it is, we're just concentrating on SATB stuff (no divisi) and learning how to sing according to the rules of The Song (at right)! We have no plans

for performance, but there will be a workshop or something (who knows what?) late November in a venue which will allow us to accommodate everyone who wants to be there.

This week, though, we sang out, and a mighty pleasure it was. Our resident medico assured everyone it was safe (and incidentally provided us with a brief lesson on the use of masks, very timely

now that some are car-pooling). There hasn't been any community transmission in southern Tasmania since early May, and only one interstate returnee who was quarantined immediately (AND obeyed orders, unlike some elsewhere), so we're doing very well. It's hard to empathise with those who think their personal wishes are more important than the health, well-being and safety of all.

COVID-SAFE Singing

Lips, teeth, tongue are bare - ly mov - ing, air stream should be mi - ni - mised,
 Fix your jaw and keep your dis - tance, hands and mu - sic san - i - tised.
 No pro - ject - ion, aw - ful dic - tion, our 'new - nor - mal' for a while! BUT
 — we're glad to be to - ge - ther, so we're sing - ing with a smile.

Many Voices, One In Song

ANCA has for many years supported vocal and choral singing research, through *Sing Out* and presentations at Choralfest. We are delighted that 2021 will see the first stand-alone ANCA research conference. In partnership with the Sydney Conservatorium High School, the conference is an opportunity to bring together choral directors, music and singing teachers, singers, voice practitioners and researchers in a collegial, informative conference setting.

We are pleased to announce themes and presenters for the conference, including three international participants – from South Africa, New Zealand and Iceland.

Performance

Eight Million Years of Choral Development: the evolutionary origins of human voice registers and dimorphism, with implications for rehearsal Associate Professor Nicholas Bannan (University of Western Australia)

The Power of Verbs and the Trouble with Adjectives: Lessons from theatre and motor learning research Amanda Cole (Griffith University)

Empathy in Song Madonna Forster (The University of Queensland)

Songs, Signs and Messages – The Voice of Kurtág Judit Molnar (Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University)

The Pursuit of Better Intonation in A Cappella Choral Singing Elizabeth Scott (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

Ensemble Singing One Voice Per Part. Historically informed performance practice in J.S. Bach cantatas Aleta King (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

International guest presenter: Dr Morag Atchison, (University of Auckland) examines *The Voice Teacher and the Choir: A Formalised Conduit Between Gesture and Vocal Production.*

Community

This is the sound of one voice, from Associate Professor Carl Crossin (University of Adelaide), explores the

enriching of choral experience through musical unity and ensemble community.

NSW & ACT ANCA President Dr Naomi Cooper describes *Estonian Singing Traditions as an Impetus for Community-Building and Expressing Estonian Cultural Heritage in Australia.*

Regional

We are delighted that Rachel Hore OAM, Bobby Maher and Dr Julie Rickwood will discuss *The Big Sing in the Desert* which began in 2010. A musical workshop in Central Australia, it would have celebrated ten years of cross-cultural singing and sharing in April 2020 had it not been for the global pandemic. Similar 'sister' events have been held elsewhere in Australia in collaboration with local communities.

International guest presenter, Dr Michael Barrett, (University of Pretoria, South Africa) examines *Traditional South African Music Repertoire - A Fusion of African and Western Elements.*

Education (Primary)

I've Seen Ducks: young children's voices. Renowned Australian composer Stephen Leek joins forces with Suzana Klarin (a passionate lead kindergarten teacher with over 30 years of experience) and Kylie Payman a general classroom and specialist music teacher at The University of Melbourne's Early Learning Centre.

Education (Secondary)

High School Choir - Commonalities Contributing to Success within Three Excellent Ensembles is a summary of research from his recently awarded doctorate by Graeme Morton (University of Queensland)

Fitting Music to Voices: A Modified Classification Framework for Managing Adolescent Voices in Australian Mixed-Voice Secondary School Choir Dr. Marie van Gend (University of Newcastle).

Classroom as Choir: Attitudes to Using Voice as the Principal Means of Instruction in Music Classrooms in

Secondary School Dr Anthony Young and Dr Jason Goopy.

Education (Tertiary)

Dr Naomi Cooper (ANCA NSW & ACT President) and Nadine Manion (ANATS, NSW President) will give us *A Snapshot of Australian Transgender Singers in the Applied Voice Studio.*

Gemma Turvey (University of Western Australia) presents *18th-Century Solfeggi and Third Stream Ear Training: Creating a Foundation for Teaching Improvisation to Classical Music Students.*

International Presentation:

Achieving Excellence with the Amateur Musician - Five Fundamental Pillars of Choral Music Education is presented by Dr Michael Barrett (University of Pretoria, South Africa),

Faith & Worship

Enduring Impacts of Cathedral Choral Training on Choristers' Lives is presented by Katie Zhukov and Margaret Barrett (Monash University)

Composition

International Presentation:

The 'Devil's Interval' *An Introduction to Icelandic Choral Music Characteristics* comes from Dr Rachelle Elliott (Iceland)

This amazing round-up of the research that has recently been completed or is currently under way is planned for March 6 & 7, 2021. Keep those dates clear and watch for further information in forthcoming E-newsletters from ANCA and the next issue of *Sing Out*.

The Singers' Companion

Personal Wisdom from the Global Music Industry

Reviewed by Christine M Storey, Melbourne-based choral conductor, and voice and classroom music teacher.

The *Singers' Companion – Personal Wisdom from the Global Music Industry* is a self-published collection (through Amazon KDP Publishing Worldwide) of some one hundred and twenty-one contributions, curated by Jazz singer Christine Sullivan and writer Monika Roleff.

The contributors are focused in the jazz, pop and contemporary music scene - from singers to instrumentalists and sound producers. They include Joe Chindamo, Will Conyers, Nina Ferro, Venetta Fields, Nichaud Fitzgibbon, Judy Jacques, Vince Jones, Bob Sedergreen to name a few.

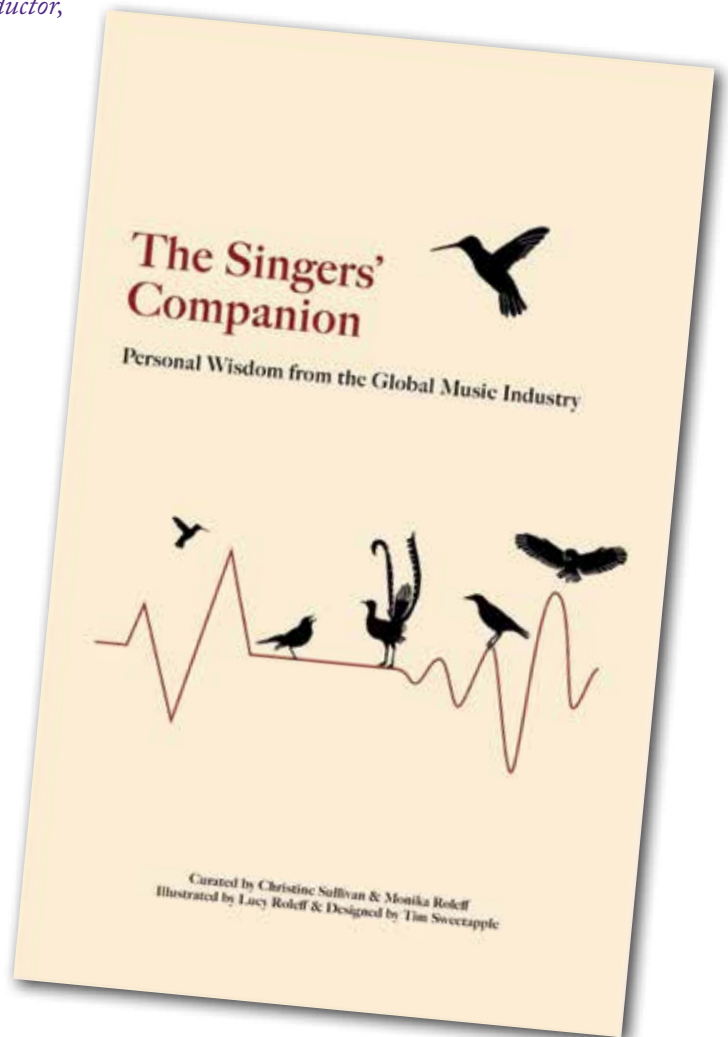
In the introduction, the curators state, "The purpose of this unique project was to offer singers and musicians who work with each other locally and internationally, a platform to speak about their personal experiences in the global music/entertainment industry" and at this they have succeeded.

The format of the contributions was either a Q&A or a free form biography. Some span many pages, others a simple paragraph. One outstanding contribution was just three short sentences by Ted Vining. The curators "wanted the singers to have as much freedom to express themselves as possible, and put no limit on amount of words or format, and gave the artist the choice of questions to select".

Such freedom has proven a double-edged sword, with great, often clunky, variations in style and focus. It is a book to be browsed rather than read cover to cover. Some notable contributions were made by Joe Chindamo, Will Conyers, Venetta Fields and Melbourne based Chinese musician Dr Wang Zheng-Ting, though there is much good advice from the other one hundred and seventeen writers. The best contributions made me feel as if I had just been to a wonderful masterclass.

It was comforting to find familiar themes running through the book – "singing chose me", "practise, practise, practise", "be on time" "listen to as many performers as you can". The importance of maintaining one's mental health and self-care in the midst of what, at the best of times, can be a rocky career path. There was only one mention of singing in a choir but Venetta Fields' comments on the skills required to be a good backing singer stood out. She emphasised the ensemble nature and knowing your role in supporting the group. Many of the instrumentalists commented upon this as well.

Two things caused concern – the polar opposite views from singers about whether singers should pursue music (theory, aural, etc) training. Some singers were very grateful for and supported learning as much as one could (particularly theory and vocal health) others said it was not necessary. The other bugbear was

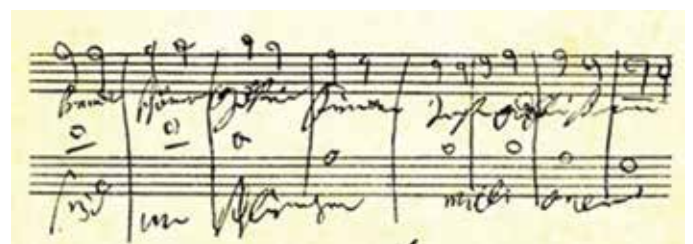


the continued use of "singers and musicians" rather than singers and instrumentalists/sound producer etc throughout the book.

Overall, a massive, almost four hundred page project that is best to dip in and out of and digest in small bites. This collection would be useful indeed to the beginning career singer, though with enough variety and wisdom for everyone else to muse and reflect upon.

The book is available on Barnes and Noble and on Amazon in paperback or eBook format.

For more information or to purchase the book, go to <http://christinesullivan.info/>.



Perhaps the very first version of the 'Ode to Joy' theme.

ANCA's Resource pages on the ANCA website



1. Resource Home • 2. Touring • 3. Networking
4. Australian Composers • 5. Second Hand Music Bulletin Board
6. Choir Vacancy • 7. Job Seeking • 8. Mentors
9. FAQ • 10. Member Benefits • AND MORE

The ANCA State Presidents and the staff in the ANCA National office are working hard to provide you, our members, with a central **GO TO** place for information on extra-musical things connected to singing in a group.

Go to anca.org.au/Resource-Network!

Need to know more...
Want to get involved??



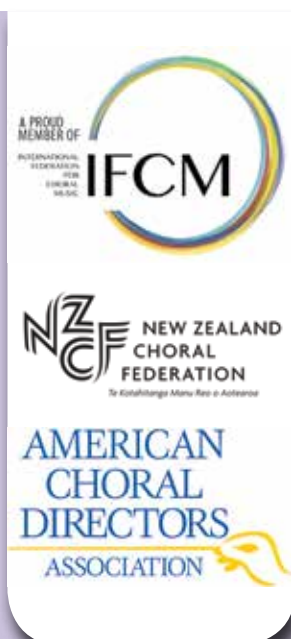
it's all just a click away
www.anca.org.au

Partnerships with ANCA

The ANCA National office has been busy this year in their search for organizations that could partnership with ANCA in order to offer more opportunities to ANCA members. ANCA is a member of the International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM).

Early this year we signed an agreement with the New Zealand Choral Federation and are now pleased to announce that we have signed an agreement with the American Choral Directors Association. Members attending either of these organization's major national events can do so for members' rates.

For events of NZCF and ACDA (and other international events), check the What's On page on the ANCA website, under the "International" listing.



2021 DEADLINES

for articles & advertisements

Volume 38 No. 1

Submission date, February 5, 2021
(for March release)

Volume 38 No. 2

Submission date, June 4, 2021
(for July release)

Volume 38 No. 3

Submission date, October 1, 2021
(for November release)

Advertising Costs (costs in \$AU)

Visit www.anca.org.au/advertising for details on Advertising on the ANCA website

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10% Discounts offered to members

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IMAGES AND ARTICLES

All articles to be supplied in Microsoft Word (11 point Times New Roman font) and artwork, images and photos as high resolution press quality 300dpi JPG (the larger, the better).

Australian Choral Anthologies

NEW RELEASE

Choral works with a distinctly 'Australian flavour'.

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Three volumes by Australian composers, one each of SATB choirs (mostly with piano accompaniment); a SA choir; and choir with instruments other than piano (with separate instrument parts).

Volume 1 for SATB consists of 16 works while each of the other volumes have nine and seven pieces respectively. Overall, we have tried to make this project as accessible as possible to ensure that this Australian music is heard and appreciated by many and enjoyed by the singers. Each volume is available as a hardcopy (paper) or instant PDF download and multiple choir copies can be downloaded individually under license at very reasonable rates.

View sample pages of each work on the Wirripang website.

<https://www.australiancomposers.com.au/collections/frontpage>

These volumes and many more choral works are available from



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