



Sotto Voce

Murray Conservatorium Choir

News of Choirs and Choral activity of the Albury Wodonga and North East Region.

Divine music for organ and choir – 19 and 20 May 2018

Audience numbers were disappointing for our Saturday evening concert of music for organ and choir. Apparently there was a wedding on somewhere which was completely distracting people!

However, a larger audience attended on the Sunday. In any case, what our audience may have lacked in numbers, they made up for in their enthusiastic reception of the music.

We were all very excited as we waited for James Flores to begin the processional number – Widor's much loved *Toccata and Fugue*. Once it started we forgot any anxiety we might have had about how it would be for the audience, and for us, singing in the loft and were swept up in the sonorous and exhilarating sounds from the LeTourneau organ in St Matthews, and by the dynamic and commanding presence of our wonderful conductor, Jeff Mosher.

What an exhilarating and amazing experience for us to sing the Vienne "Messe Solennelle" with James on the organ and Jeff conducting. Audience feedback indicated that they also thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

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We were fortunate to have Pfeiffer's Wines selling delicious wines at interval and as we socialised afterwards. Really added to the enjoyment for everyone.

The entire concert has been made available with recordings by James Flores on Youtube . Search for James Flores

Organist or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEjKdgXnHyg>

Farewell dear Mr Mosher

Sixty people attended the farewell function for our departing Music Director, Jeff Mosher. Jeff has been our MD for four months, and now is returning to the USA to continue his studies. We've had a ball with Jeff, and we send him home with a great deal of sadness. He has not just been a fantastic Music Director for the choir. He has also become a significant asset in the local music community in the short time he's been here.

We presented Jeff with our "farewell anthem" *Bye Bye American Guy* – a rendition – or rather a rendering - of Don Maclean's *American Pie*. What we lacked in finesse we made up for with gusto. Many tears were shed!

We are grateful to the Albion Hotel for hosting the function and for their ongoing support to the choir.

Albury-Wodonga will really miss Jeff. We hope he will return to us from time to time, and we have presented him with a couple of books about the Outback and other wonderful things to do in Australia, in the hope of encouraging him to do just that. We send him off "with a tear in our eye", but we will watch his future career with pride. He was for a while "Our American Guy"! It was a privilege to have him with us and he takes with him our love and every good wish for a wonderful future.



Welcome to Pippa

British choral conductor Pippa Andrew is internationally acclaimed for her ability to make choral music accessible and musical interpretation that connects singers and audience members with the heart of choral music

Pippa conducts for the *Australian Children's Choir*, *Beyond The Bathroom Choir*, *Melbourne Inner North Performing Arts Academy Choir* and is newly appointed to the *Murray Conservatorium* vocal faculty, as Conductor of the *Murray Conservatorium Consort* and Artistic Director of the *Murray Conservatorium Choir*.

Pippa started her choral career as a Statutory Chorister at *Manchester Cathedral*, attending *Chetham's School of Music*. She continued studies as a junior at the *Royal Northern College of Music*, later graduating with a BA (Hons) in Music from *The University of Salford* and an MA in Composition from *Leeds College of Music*.

Also a passionate and accomplished choral singer and soloist, Pippa's previous long term

performance commitments include *St Endellion Festival Chorus, Manchester Chamber Choir, The Manchester Consort, The Voice Collective and the Australian Chamber Choir.*

Pippa resides in Melbourne and also works as a violist, composer and musical artist. More information about her work can be found at www.pippaandrew.com



MUSIC CURRENTLY IN PREPARATION

Already, Pippa is making her mark with the repertoire for the next concert including

Victoria: **O quam gloriosum est regnum**

Bach : **Jesu meine freude**

Bruckner: **Motets**

Stanford : **Motets**

CHOIR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Murray Conservatorium Choir now has two scholarships or awards to encourage young people to participate in the choir. The Bill Kell Scholarship was established in 2003 by the family of local Solicitor, Bill Kell, a foundation member of the choir, who died in 2003. The Trust set up by the Kell family has now been fully expended, and the choir now funds the Bill Kell scholarship from its own funds. Our current Bill Kell Scholar is Soprano Emily Strachan

Early this year, the Committee of Management decided to establish another award to assist young people to sing with us, this time in honour of Helen Barton, a past President of the choir and long-time choir member, who sadly lost her battle with cancer late in 2017. Tenor James Strachan is the inaugural Helen Barton Chorister for 2018. Helen's sister Lynne Keshir presented the award to James in February.

Congratulations to both those talented young singers – we are delighted to have them with us in the choir and hope they enjoy the experience of sharing our love of choral music.

The Committee of Management will be considering ways of extending our scholarship program to involve more young people in the choir in future years.



Why does Hugh Sing?: Hugh McKenzie-McHarg:
Tenor

What is it that makes Hugh sing?

Well the obvious and familiar answer for our treasurer/tenor would be when all members of the choir have paid their annual dues on time!

But it goes a lot deeper than that.

Hugh's earliest memories of music was his father's addiction to the music of Burl Ives and Bing Crosby, and family singing in the car on long trips.

Blokey enough music for a kid growing up in the country and inevitably, footy completely distracted him but for a brief inconclusive dabble with piano lessons and mandatory school Christmas concerts.

However, the music making spark had been smouldering away, flashing inevitably into life in the bar after footy. In his 20's, Hugh's inhibitions were washed away by the company, the rugby songbook and the inevitable Clancy Brothers giving new life to the Irish Folk tradition.

Other priorities intervened and it wasn't until much later in life that Hugh's musical spark was rekindled.

Being a good Dad, he found himself, driving his daughter out to Yackandandah every Sunday afternoon for rehearsals of the Yackandandah Folk Festival Community Choir.

'Well if I'm going to have to drive out there, wait around and then drive back again, I may as well join in!'

And that was the catalyst that lead to Hugh joining the Murray Con Choir about 8 years ago, responding to another desperate call for Tenors in particular to join up.

In his time with the tenors to date, Hugh specially remembers and treasures, the Mozart Requiem, and the Conmen and the Australian Men's Choir, and the 'American Trilogy'.

Hugh has proven admirably, that music making is open to anyone with a passion and a willingness to work at the skills that make it possible.

Help is always at hand

"Oh no!.. Ive left my reading glasses at home!".. wailed a distressed lady soprano during the warmup for the last concert.

"Hang on a bit.. rumaging around in her bag... no one claimed these after a concert three years ago and I've been carrying them around ever since!"

Perfect fit!.. Vision, and dignity restored. I wonder what else Penny has in that bag!



Listen out for this

A reminder of Musical Events to listen out for in the next 2 months

Contact the Editor Doug Westland with details for inclusion in this diary.

JUNE		
Tuesday, 19 June 1.10pm to 1.50	'Tunes on Tuesday' Lunchtime Recital: St Matthew's Albury	James Flores Organ
JULY		
Tuesday 3 July 1.10 to 1.50	'Tunes on Tuesday' Lunchtime Recital: St Matthew's Albury	Gareth Beard Organ
Tuesday 17 July 1.10 to 1.50	'Tunes on Tuesday' Lunchtime Recital: St Matthew's Albury	Caleb Murray Cello
Tuesday 31 July 1.10 to 1.50	'Tunes on Tuesday' Lunchtime Recital: St Matthew's Albury	James Flores Piano

Murray Conservatorium Choir

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