



Newsletter

Patron: Sir Trevor Garland
Past Patron: Dr I G Dicker

December 2015

From the Director

As we reach the end of the year, it is a good time to reflect on what has been achieved – the good and the not-so-good! On the positive side we have gained some new recruits and the choir is gaining in experience and singing well. We receive many compliments about the standard that we achieve. I recently heard the results of our recording session and there was some fine singing in this. We celebrated 25 years at a Festal Evensong followed by a party. It was good to see Shirley Mills, the first Director, at this event.

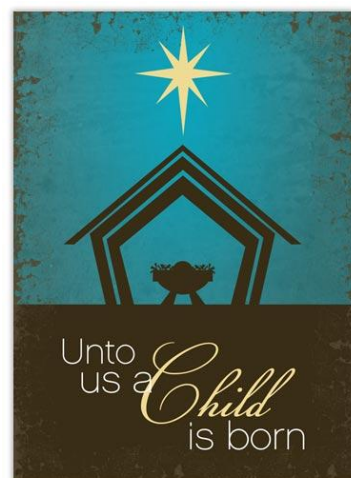
Over the year we have sung many services and concerts at churches where we have been before plus a few new ones. The weekend in Goulburn singing in both cathedrals was very successful. We are also getting more wedding bookings.

On the down side, our finances are not great and the number of regular singers is a little low – we need some more recruits. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping with either of these problems, let us know!

We are in the middle of the Christmas period with our regular Advent /Carol services at Leura, Cremorne, Balmain and Gordon. hope that we will be able to see our friends and supporters at least one of these events.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Director



I

From the Chair

Greetings all

This year we are producing a fourth Newsletter but it is appearing very close to Christmas. I hope you can find a moment to check it out sometime.



As usual, much has happened this year and TCS is doing well. Certainly we have been receiving some very favourable comments recently. The composition of the choir has changed again and we have a group of very dedicated choristers who work well together and are all committed to bringing music of the highest standard possible wherever we go.

Recently we have been involved in some very interesting occasions as you will read further on. As an example – last week we sang at Sir Trevor’s Annual Christmas Party, where all sorts of interesting things happen! This year there was Samoan dancing – what a treat! Last week we sang at a funeral, then 2 more carol services before Midnight Mass at Balmain. We will then be singing at a wedding straight after Christmas.

We have several new members this year and have recently welcomed – a tenor!!! Sally is one of our talented group and we might see more geology references in our articles! Anita is doing a sterling job of balancing the frenetic life of supporting two very talented daughters and still managing to sing with us. We all seem to be very busy but manage to find the time to sing the music that we love.



We are pleased to announce that we have once more been awarded a grant from Ku-ring-gai Council towards choral workshops and maintaining the standard of the choir through workshops with another recording session planned for the New Year. We are very grateful for this generous contribution towards the work of the choir.

As the year draws to a close, may I wish all our supporters a very Happy Christmas season and every blessing for the coming year.

God bless

Jan Kneeshaw
Secretary/ Chair



The Cathedral Singers

A reminder of our contact details:

Postal address: The Cathedral Singers PO Box 569 Gordon NSW 2072

Please email us for further details: tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au

or ring Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or 0411 785 117

Jim Abraham - Director: 0405 817 276

More details on our website: www.cathedralsingers.org.au



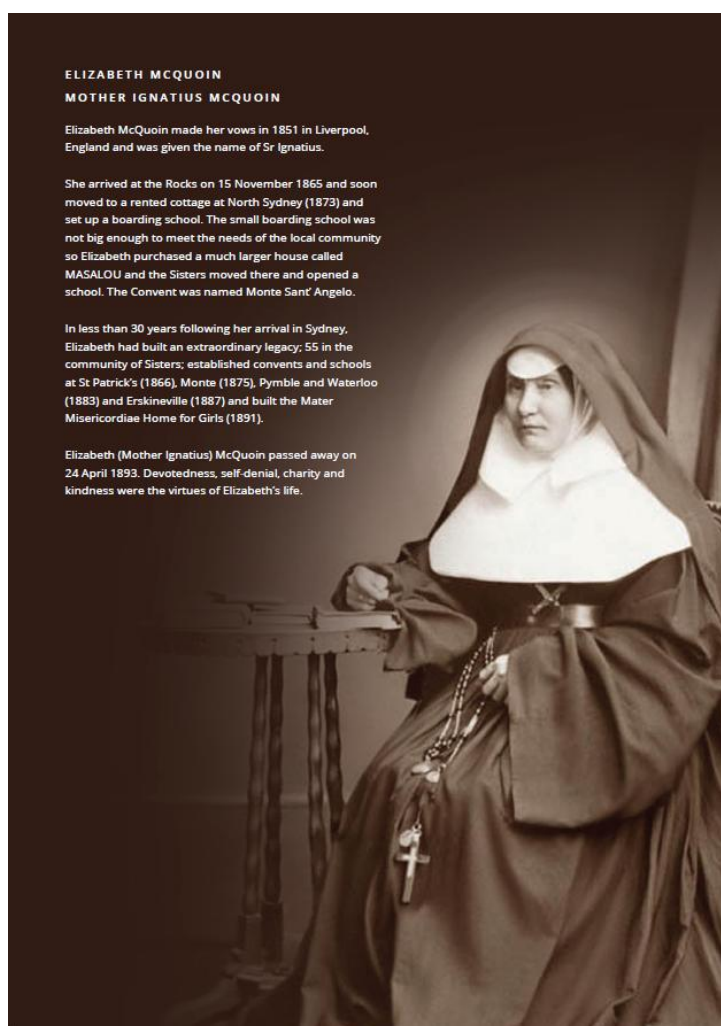
150 Years
of the
Sisters of Mercy
North Sydney

On the 22nd of November 2015, The Cathedral Singers performed at a special ceremony to celebrate 150 years of service by the Sisters of Mercy in North Sydney. We were joined in this effort with a small orchestra of mostly professional players and organist Dr Brett McKern.

All of the music requested by the Sisters was organised and coordinated by TCS alto Madeleine Rowles. She received many thanks and accolades after the event - both from those in attendance, and those who performed. The music ranged from contemporary Catholic mass settings by David Haas and Christopher Willcock SJ through to *Jubilate Deo* by Cardinal Domenico Bartolucci. All of the musicians were well directed by our own conductor Jim Abraham, with Madeleine acting as a liaison with the Sisters. Many of us were congratulated and thanked by those in attendance.

The service itself was very meaningful and informative. It was opened by an original owner of the land playing didgeridoo, and the distinctive call of the kookaburra could be heard during this performance. The display of circular breathing and the array of sounds produced with the instrument was impressive. This opening reflected the Sisters' commitment to one of their founding values - that of preserving and restoring dignity.

During the service there was a short video presentation about the invaluable work the sisters have done over the last 150 years - showing their dedication to the needy and those in ill health, but also their work in education at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College. It also gave insight into the life of their foundress, Catherine McAuley. Her prayer *Suscipe* ('My God, I am yours for time and eternity ...') has been set to music and is very dear to the hearts of the Sisters of Mercy. The version we sang was composed by Elaine Deasey RSM and arranged by Andrew Fiddes.



The service was a blessing to all members of TCS in attendance. The reward was two-fold - the first part coming from collaborating with so many accomplished musicians. The second part of the reward was to bear witness to the outstanding work of this very special group of women. We ended with a fitting and grand rendition of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* which drew spontaneous applause from many of those in attendance.

Emma Ericson
TCS Tenorette



TCS & orchestra at St Mary's Catholic Church, North Sydney for the Mercy Sesquicentenary

Background to involvement with the Mercy Sesquicentenary....

Despite being in TCS for nearly seven years, I've never provided a personal profile, however the story of TCS's involvement in the Mercy Sesquicentenary may do double-duty, at least in part!

Besides TCS, volunteer music in two Catholic parishes and occasional pursuit of 'secular' music interests, I run a mostly-church-music group known by the something-of-a-misnomer 'FolkTails'. (A long story for another time—the name stuck!) It began as a quintet, when my husband and I branched out from parish music into weddings and functions in the late '80s to supplement our income, providing combinations of three voices, two guitars, violin, cello, flute, recorders and organ. Through a variety of services and venues all over greater Sydney, the range of music and often playing where there was no organ (or one that would better serve the Church as fuel for the New Fire at the Easter Vigil) we learned to be versatile, and pragmatic about non-ideal working conditions (and when to say "no"). Published arrangements never covered our non-standard ensemble so I learned to 'roll my own', becoming interested in arranging music for the tools at hand, in particular in (tastefully) adapting selected traditional hymnody for voice/guitar with optional strings, oboe, etc.

FolkTails is now (intentionally!) far less busy, and works mainly for personal contacts in Catholic religious and health care organisations, providing one up to eight or so musicians as venue and budget require and permit. I've been fortunate to build up a small network of professional and experienced amateur players over the years who understand (whether personally churchgoers or not)

that the music we play has real meaning for those present. I have little formal music education, and owe much of my practical education to their patient guidance and feedback.

I came to know Sr Jennifer Ryan of the North Sydney Mercy congregation during her time as school principal in my home parish, and through her friendship 'FolkTails & Friends' has played for Sisters of Mercy silver and golden jubilees of final profession, Requiem Masses, special Mater Hospital services etc. over many years.

In 2015, in addition to several Requiems, the nuns entrusted FolkTails with music for three important anniversaries. 23 January saw a well-attended Mass for the centenary of the beautiful Mother Ignatius Memorial Chapel, better known as the Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College chapel. On 27 March, another Mass marked the Mater Hospital sesquicentenary, this time in the hospital Healing Garden, with Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO as guest of honour. And then, 'The Big One'—the sesquicentenary of the wider work of the Mercy Order in North Sydney, on 22 November.

For this service, the Sisters wanted something over-and-above the cantor and 8-10 instruments of the earlier anniversaries—a small orchestra was needed. They also asked me to engage a choir—funnily enough, I just happened to know of one!

Happily, Jim agreed to TCS's involvement and to conduct all on the day. While TCS busily prepared new music, instrumental forces were marshalled from the FolkTails network, two of Jim's/Brett McKern's contacts and one from TCS bass Dave Lewis—daughter-in-law, professional flautist Lisa Osmialowski. (It's astonishing how much paper there is in a service—worth of charts for eleven strings, one oboe, two flutes, two trumpets, one organist/pianist and one conductor ... I am sure I printed my way through two-and-a-half reams of the stuff!)

On the TCS side, Jim, Jan, Janet and Lynn did a sterling job of managing regulars, deputies, new music, robes, folders, choir versions of orders of service, etc. We're always grateful to deputies but particularly so this time—a few regulars unfortunately couldn't sing but a good-sized choir was needed to balance the orchestra. Brett also worked hard, composing an orchestral fanfare for the closing hymn and accompanying choir and orchestra rehearsals as well as the service.

It's fair to say we were deluged in appreciation on the day—I've never seen quite so many people get so excited in church! Several of the nuns said they fully expected to enjoy the music, but that their expectation was exceeded. This led to me to reflect that in a way, the credit is partly theirs.

Anyone in general industry will have heard, 'budget, schedule, quality – pick two.' In church music, I've heard this paraphrased as, 'beautiful, frequent, inexpensive – pick two'. Money in church music can be a controversial topic, but it's safe to say building up a music group and guaranteeing consistent standards over time is difficult without monetary support.

TCS singers are volunteers but without occasional injections of Vitamin M there'd be no professional director and 'safety net' accompanist, new music, web site, essential insurance cover, workshops, recordings etc. to help uphold standards. As for FolkTails, I can donate my time as an amateur no longer dependent on any income from music, but I couldn't provide suitable groups 'on

demand'. The Sisters of Mercy have always believed that worthy worship requires your best offering in terms of music, and that the time, experience and expenses of musicians with the appropriate experience should be justly compensated as in any other field of expertise. This was the case at the sesquicentenary, as for every other time I've worked for them, and in that sense the Sisters themselves who wanted good music and provided adequate budget to enable it should share credit for the result achieved.

As should everyone who supports TCS! It is always humbling when parishes with little money shows how they value liturgical music by making a donation every time we visit, and it's also a personal reminder to me of the care we owe in carrying out this particular form of service to others.

Madeleine Rowles

TCS Alto

Carols at West Pymble Shopping Centre

Here we are! Eleven happy early risers plus our iconic Jim (taking the picture), celebrating and making a merry noise for shoppers and their children, carol singing in sunny West Pymble shopping centre on Saturday 5th December. A wonderful launch into the Christmas season here in Sydney. What we need now are a few young enthusiastic musicians to come and join us. We are a truly ecumenical bunch of souls, singing wherever we can shine our light, from this small space in a Sydney suburb to cathedrals, churches and venues in New South Wales, the ACT, New Zealand and the UK. You can find our contact details somewhere in this newsletter.....just keep reading! We want to hear from you.

Mike Austin

TCS Bass



Advent in Leura

Time seems to move faster nowadays than when I was young but very pleasantly the time had quickly rolled round again to make the annual pleasant Sunday afternoon drive up the Blue Mountains to Leura to visit St. Albans Anglican Church for its annual festival of readings and carols on Advent Sunday, this year on Sunday 29 November. It was made all the more pleasant because there was no heat or rain – just a nice temperate Sunday afternoon.



The singers have been presenting their talents at this annual service for some years and it was a pleasure for me as a Singers “Groupie” again to sit in the pews and hear the wonderful harmonies, enunciation and balance that the TCS can produce.

The Acting Rector, the Reverend Philip Bassett at the beginning of the Service welcomed all present and from the Narthex, the Singers sang Palestrina’s setting of the Sarum chant “I Look from Afar” with fine solos from Madeleine Rowles and Lynn Bock. This work is a quite apt statement of the nature of Advent and set the scene for the other fine carols and anthems included in the service.

I was particularly taken with the selection of works set by the Singers’ Director, Mr Jim Abraham. From my observation of like services in other places, quite often the musical works can be quite hackneyed with undue reliance on the “tried and true”. On this occasion, the works were all pertinent to what Advent is intended to convey – the expectation of celebrating the birth of God’s Son, Jesus Christ and looking also for his second coming when ultimately he will become our Advocate with the Father and obtain for us eternal salvation. Also they were works that are not heard all that often and provided much food for thought as they proceeded interspersed with the Lessons, three of which were read by Singers Members Pauline Thomas, John Stanbridge and Janet Long.



I was also taken by Mendelssohn’s arrangement of Philipp Nicolai’s “Wachet Auf” and Orlando Gibbons’s “Record of John” (St. John’s Gospel C1 V 19 – 23), the latter also including another fine solo from Madeleine Rowles. Each in its own way points strongly to the message of Advent.

And Walford-Davies’ “God Be in My Head”? What more can be said? In its own way, perfect for Advent as a succinct statement of the Christian Faith and an expression of personal piety.

Well done, The Cathedral Singers! Long may this delightful event continue into the future.

Ken Bock
“Groupie”

Ken also broadcasts on 2RPH FM, advertises our major events and plays music from our CDs. Thank you Ken! Ed.

Carols at the Consulate

What a treat it was to sing at the Consulate of the Solomon Islands on Saturday, December 12th. It was a beautiful evening and we were treated to drinks and meaty snacks before the proceedings began with a Welcome to Country. There was much joyous singing and dancing performed by Islanders and even some attempts to teach some of the assembled guests the traditional dances. Lynn and Anita had one-on-one instruction from the leader of the dance troupe and were great sports!

As is traditional, TCS performed a set of carols from the 1st floor veranda accompanied by Jim on the organ and later were joined on the downstairs veranda by other guests for a community carol sing-along. It was a beautiful, clear night and a privilege for the Singers to be included again in the annual Christmas gathering hosted by Solomon Island Consul and TCS Patron, Sir Trevor Garland.



TCS members in awe of the spectacular show



Sir Trevor's husky, Woof, thought it was pretty good too and wanted to join in.



Singing from the balcony



TCS joined by other guests for a community carol sing.

Sally Rigden
TCS Soprano

CAN YOU HELP SUPPORT TCS?



As most of our readers know, The Cathedral Singers exists to help maintain the tradition of singing traditional church music in churches all around Sydney and beyond. We usually don't ask for payment as such but do appreciate donations and encourage churches where we sing to give a donation if they can afford it. These days, not all churches can afford to give much.

Although we are confident that we are meant to continue with our activities, in our more serious moments we worry about finances and the fact that our income has decreased in recent years. We would accordingly greatly value any donations, and remind you of our tax deductibility status. We do have significant expenses and need a steady income to keep going.

On a more positive note, we are pleased to announce that we have again been awarded a small grant from Kuring-gai Council, for which we are extremely grateful.

At this time of year we are also very busy singing carols in various churches and other places where we have an opportunity to remind people of the true meaning of Christmas in song. We are very pleased to have been invited to sing at the Christmas Festival at West Pymble Shopping Centre and thank the West Pymble Chamber of Commerce for inviting us.

I was touched by this comment in a recent email from their organiser, Paul:

This day is freely given to the local community by the Chamber Members to help everyone remember that this is the season for giving for peace, love and goodwill to all and is our most joyous time of year. Seems to me this has been largely forgotten today. We will be very happy for you to participate and have FUN!!

Another possible way of supporting TCS is to pass our name on if you know of anyone looking for a choir to sing at weddings, concerts, shops, etc. We might bring a begging bowl though!

So as you consider this time of year when we remember the birth of our Saviour, maybe you could consider a small contribution towards our goal of singing God's praises in music.

Financial details are listed on the back pages of this Newsletter.

Jan Kneeshaw

Chair - TCS

Check out our website and then tell your friends!

www.cathedralsingers.org.au

See details of the choir, news, coming events, music listings, contacts for bookings weddings and other events, information for interested choristers wanting to audition.

Would you like to consider joining us?

Contact Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or the Director, Jim Abraham on 0405 817 276

BROADCASTING FINE MUSIC –

Fine Music 102.5 has been broadcasting a weekly program entitled “Hosanna” at 5pm on Sundays for many years. Meg Matthews and her assistants have been very generous in their support of TCS and have often broadcast excerpts from our CDs as well as advertising our events. We are very appreciative of this publicity.

Stephen Matthews is now assisting with this and other programs and alerted me to the fact that there will be a new program next year. He has kindly provided some details of these new programs for your information.

Stephen says:



“Musica Sacra” has been included in the Fine Music 102.5 schedule for the first half of 2016 in response to listener requests for more sacred music on Sundays. It is in addition to the popular “Hosanna” programme that will continue to go to air on Sundays at 5.00pm.

I am presenting whenever there is a 5th Sunday of the month.

Dominico Scarlatti’s “Stabat Mater”, Charpentier’s “Te Deum”, J S Bach’s “Jesu, Meine Freude” and Joseph Haydn’s “Harmony Mass” have been scheduled for broadcast during January.

I have programmed the following for May:

Missa Sopra “Allien Gott der Höh sei Ehr” Johann Ludwig Bach

Plaudite, Sonat Tuba Motetto Johann Joseph Fux

Missa Corporis Christie Joseph Fux

The plan for “Musica Sacra” is mostly sacred **choral** music at this stage although I have no doubt some presenters will include church sonatas, organ voluntaries etc. We are also working on what is currently an occasional programme for larger sacred choral works.

It’s all part of the effort to get more sacred music to air!

Thanks for the promotion. <http://www.finemusicfm.com/>

Stephen Matthews

TRIVIA CORNER

... a note of trivia, which tickled my fancy when I found that our director, Jim Abraham has moved to live within 25 m of where “Narrabeen man” was found . Jim wonders what the Narrabeen man has to do with a church music Newsletter, but he was silly enough to tell the editor that he now lives close to the supposed site..... enough said!

Ed.

Narrabeen Man

...is the name given to a 4,000-year-old skeleton of a tall Australian Aboriginal man found during road works in Narrabeen, a coastal suburb North of Sydney, in January 2005. (Wikipedia)



From: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2007-12-21/speared-man-unearthed-after-4000-years/994510>

Dr Jo McDonald, an archaeologist and senior research fellow at the Australian National University, explains what they found.

“It was actually still articulated, all the bones were still in their right anatomical position,” Dr McDonald said. “It was lying there where it had fallen. But basically underneath the bus shelter.” Among the bones the team found 17 stone artefacts.

Dr McDonald says she and her colleagues believe the man was murdered in some way. “It’s actually the oldest dated skeleton in Sydney” she said..... and the earliest evidence of ritual punishment.

Happy googling!!

CD Order/Donation Form



The Cathedral Singers



TCS Sings Evensong



Lo! The Star

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/Other _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Enclosed is my cheque/money order for: (✓ Tick appropriate box/s)

- CD 3 "Lo! The Star" @ \$15 each _____ \$ _____
- CD 2 "The Cathedral Singers" @ \$15 each _____ \$ _____
- CD 4 "The Cathedral Singers Sing Evensong" @ 15 each _____ \$ _____
- Any 2 CDs - \$25 _____ \$ _____
- Any 3 CDs - \$30 _____ \$ _____
- + Postage and handling @ \$5 per CD _____ \$ _____

- Donation for our ongoing ministry _____ \$ _____

- Total: _____ \$ _____

Cheques should be made payable to "The Cathedral Singers Donation Fund"

Banking details for direct transfers (please notify us by email):

Bank account details: BSB 814 282 A/c 504 371 53

Note: this is a new account.

Postal address: The Cathedral Singers PO Box 569 Gordon NSW 2072

Please email us for further details: tcs@cathedralsingers.org.au

or ring Jan Kneeshaw on 9144 4915 or 0411 785 117

More details on our website: www.cathedralsingers.org.au

All donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible

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