

NOTES FROM THE TOP

Mandurah City Choral Society Newsletter | Summer edition 2015 | Editor Roger Palmer

President's message

The MCCS year has come to a close with a wonderful Christmas concert in Christ's church. We kept it light this year with some traditional carols for the audience to sing interspersed with three poems read by choir members, one an original by the reader. The venue was full and it shows we are gaining a reputation as the premier choir in the region. The highlight of the performance was perhaps, choristers singing Vivaldi's Gloria without music.

It has been a somewhat different year for us being in partnership with the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. They have been a pleasure to work with and it has certainly lifted our profile in the community. The Proms concert in October with the Mandurah Festival Orchestra, was an outstanding success and significantly contributed to the music culture of Mandurah. The partnership is set to continue in 2016 with some exciting events including the choir's 25th anniversary.

Thanks again to the wonderful talents of our music director Chris Ryland and accompanist Chris Timoney. They continually raise the bar musically and I believe the choir has well and truly risen to the challenge.

There will be some changes to the MCCS committee next year and we are always looking for enthusiastic members to join. Do consider it!

All the best for the holiday season.

Wendy Summers
MCCS President



House on the Hill

I live in a house as the hills rise, where the wind makes the gum trees all sway.
I listen most nights as the light dies, when travelers pass on their way
Is that noise in the roof timbers creaking? Is the breeze blowing through the bare floor?
And rain on the roof, is it leaking? Do I hear a footfall pass my door?

The candle snuffs out, it's a mystery, are the ghosts of this house now on show?
For this is a place full of history and tales of folk long, long ago.
No cure for disease in a life short, where death is a part of our time.
Cruel sickness is always our consort, with many cut down in their prime.

I live in a house at the hilltop, where the wind makes the gum trees all fly
Will my life be as fleet as a raindrop that falls in a darkening sky?
I dream of that place on a hillside, yes, I dream of those people of old.
They travel on past like a flood tide, I can see how my life may unfold.

Roger Palmer
Editor





Music director's observations

Original idea and lyrics by David Rakowski and friends. Additional lyrics by Dave Swenson.

THE MUSIC THEORY SONG

Original idea and lyrics by David Rakowski and friends. Additional lyrics by Dave Swenson.

THE MUSIC THEORY SONG

Chord progressions and lyrics for the song:

- Line 1:** Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, Cmaj7, Gm7, C7, F, E7. Lyrics: Oc - tave mov - ing to the me - di - ant Ma - jor 6th step - ping down to do
- Line 2:** Am7, Fm6, C, F#m7, B7, Emaj7, Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj7, Dm7, G7. Lyrics: Ma - jor sec - onds be - ing sung by a choir, Chro - ma - tic al - ter - a - tions of the scale, Di - a - ton - ic
- Line 3:** Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, Cmaj7, Gm7, C7, F, E7. Lyrics: scale, de - scend - ing scale to min - or third Ma - jor 6th ii V - 7 of IV
- Line 4:** Am7, Fm6, C, F#m7, B7, Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7. Lyrics: Ma - jor sec - onds with their ears o - pen wide, will hear a pret - ty tri - tone to - night. There's mi - nor
- Line 5:** Gm7, C7, Gm7, C7, Gm7, C7, Fmaj9. Lyrics: sev - enth in the bridge There's al - so lots of mi - nor sec - onds in the bridge and ev' - ry
- Line 6:** Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj9, Am7, D7, Dm7/G, G7. Lyrics: mi - nor 6th is gon - na try to hear the su - per - ton - ic o - ver V of V A
- Line 7:** Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, Cmaj7, Gm7, C7, F, E7. Lyrics: mo - tif used to build this sim - ple phrase Ma - jor 6th five walks down to one. Al -
- Line 8:** Am7, Bb9, C, F#m7, F7, Em7, Eb9, Dm7. Lyrics: though this phrase ris - es to a high lead - ing tone, Drop a per - fect fifth, Meet the
- Line 9:** Em7, Eb9, Dm7, Em7, Eb9, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7. Lyrics: Flint - stones, Sing a per - fect fourth two one.

Chris Ryland
Musical Director



Meet a choir member – Jannette Barrett

Highlights of my life – as told to the Editor

I was born in Sydney on International Women's Day in 1953. My early life was spent in Parramatta where I lived with my parents and two older siblings. I left school quite early and worked in administrative roles, mostly at Royal North Shore Hospital. I started competitive ballroom dancing in Sydney and have a dance teaching qualification.

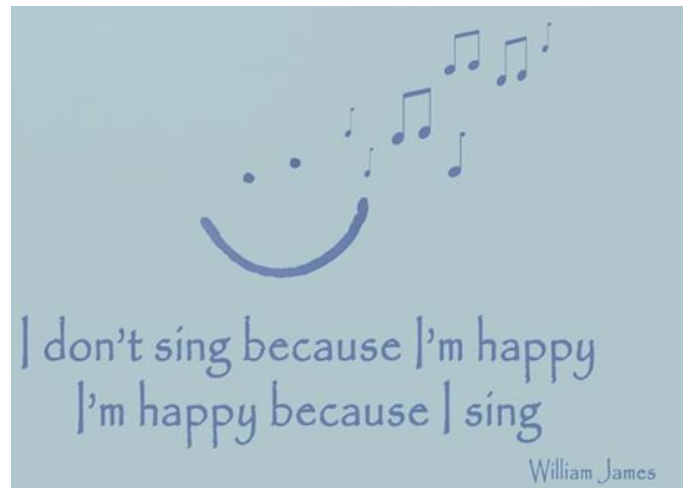
The attractions of Western Australia beckoned and in 1984, I moved to Bicton with a friend. I worked at UWA for 23 years and during that time gained a Bachelor of Applied Science in Health Education from Curtin University, graduating in 1989.

My job at UWA was made redundant in 2007 and I took this opportunity to answer a lifelong call to go to India and work with children. I have gained most satisfaction from my work at the Balmaitri Children's Home and School in Northern India where I did some basic teaching and established a sponsorship program for the poorest of the children which is ongoing. I have visited India about a dozen times.

I moved to Mandurah in 2014 to join my mum and sister and am a volunteer at the Peel Health Campus. Being part of the altos in MCCS and particularly the type of music we sing, are a delight to me.

Meditation is important to my life's wellbeing and as is being your choir librarian. I enjoy meeting members, albeit briefly as you hand back your music, hopefully in full and on time! You will note my ad in this edition of 'Notes From The Top'. This is a particular enjoyment of mine, as I meet and am able to help many people who would otherwise be lost with the intricacies of modern technology. I am now a full time carer for my 92 year old mum.

My life continues in beautiful Mandurah.



Christmas Break

MCCS will be on Summer holidays from Monday 14 December 2015 returning Monday 1 February 2016. We will be rehearsing at MPAC for the first half of 2016.

Note to members: Monday 1 February 2016 will also be our annual AGM – please be ready at 7pm at the MPAC Dance Studio.

MPAC in 2016

Mon 29 Feb	Strung Out
Sat 5 Mar	WASO in Mandurah
Sat 12 Mar	Hope and Inspiration – The Choir of Hard Knocks

Tickets at the Mandurah Performing Arts box office.

www.manpac.com.au



MANDURAH
PERFORMING ARTS
CENTRE





The Fire at Ross's Farm

Henry Lawson

THE squatter saw his pastures wide decrease, as one by one
The farmers moving to the west selected on his run;
Selectors took the water up and all the black soil round;
The best grass-land the squatter had was spoilt by Ross's ground.

Now many schemes to shift old Ross had racked the squatter's
brains,
But Sandy had the stubborn blood of Scotland in his veins;
He held the land and fenced it in, he cleared and ploughed the
soil,
And year by year a richer crop Repaid him for his toil.

Between the homes for many years the devil left his tracks:
The squatter pounded Ross's stock, and Sandy pounded Black's.
A well upon the lower run was filled with earth and logs,
And Black laid baits about the farm to poison Ross's dogs.

It was, indeed, a deadly feud of class and creed and race;
But, yet, there was a Romeo and a Juliet in the case;
And more than once across the flats, beneath the Southern
Cross,
Young Robert Black was seen to ride with pretty Jenny Ross.

One Christmas time, when months of drought had parched the
western creeks,
The bush-fires started in the north and travelled south for
weeks.
At night along the river-side The scene was grand and strange
The hill-fires looked like lighted streets of cities in the range.

The cattle-tracks between the trees were like long dusky aisles,
And on a sudden breeze the fire would sweep along for miles;
Like sounds of distant musketry it crackled through the brakes,
And o'er the flat of silver grass it hissed like angry snakes.

It leapt across the flowing streams and raced o'er pastures
broad;
It climbed the trees and lit the boughs and through the scrubs it
roared.

The bees fell stifled in the smoke or perished in their hives,
And with the stock the kangaroos went flying for their lives.

The sun had set on Christmas Eve, when, through the scrub-
lands wide,
Young Robert Black came riding home as only natives ride.
He galloped to the homestead door and gave the first alarm:
'The fire is past the granite spur, and close to Ross's farm.'

'Now, father, send the men at once, they won't be wanted here;
'Poor Ross's wheat is all he has to pull him through the year.'
'Then let it burn,' the squatter said; I'd like to see it done —
'I'd bless the fire if it would clear selectors from the run.'

'Go if you will,' the squatter said, 'you shall not take the men —
'Go out and join your precious friends, 'and don't come here
again.'

'I won't come back,' young Robert cried, and, reckless in his ire,
He sharply turned his horse's head and galloped towards the
fire.

And there, for three long weary hours, half-blind with smoke and
heat,

Old Ross and Robert fought the flames that neared the ripened
wheat.

The farmer's hand was nerved by fears of danger and of loss;
And Robert fought the stubborn foe for the love of Jenny Ross.

But serpent-like the curves and lines slipped past them, and
between,

Until they reached the bound'ry where the old coach-road had
been.

'The track is now our only hope, 'there we must stand,' cried
Ross,

'For nought on earth can stop the fire if once it gets across.'

Then came a cruel gust of wind, and, with a fiendish rush,
The flames leapt o'er the narrow path and lit the fence of brush.
'The crop must burn!' the farmer cried, 'We cannot save it now,'
And down upon the blackened ground he dashed the ragged
bough.

But wildly, in a rush of hope, his heart began to beat,
For o'er the crackling fire he heard the sound of horses' feet.
'Here's help at last,' young Robert cried, and even as he spoke
The squatter with a dozen men came racing through the smoke.

Down on the ground the stockmen jumped and bared each
brawny arm,

They tore green branches from the trees and fought for Ross's
farm;

And when before the gallant band the beaten flames gave way,
Two grimy hands in friendship joined - and it was Christmas Day.

D&A
Wood Works
Unit 4/39 Reserve Drive, Mandurah

- ☒ Manufacturers of Quality Kitchens
- ☒ Timber and Laminate Flooring
- ☒ Re-laminating Work tops
- ☒ Dishwasher Cut-ins
- ☒ Wardrobe Fit-outs
- ☒ Shop fits
- ☒ Television units

Fast, Friendly and Professional Service
For a Free, No-obligation Quote
Please Ring Dave or Alex on:
0424 993 920 or 0408 934 813
Answering Machine and Fax:
08 9586 8994
e-mail: dawoodworks@westnet.com.au

TA1340385



Editor's Comment

A Choristers' Guide To Working Effectively With Conductors

The basic training of every singer should, of course, include myriad types of practical and theoretical emphases. One important area which is often neglected, however, is the art of working with your conductor. The following rules are intended as guides to the development of habits which will promote the proper type of relationship between singer and conductor.

- Wait until well into a rehearsal before letting the conductor know that you don't have the music.
- Bury your head in the music just before cues.
- Loudly clear your throat during pauses (tenors are trained to do this from birth). Quiet instrumental interludes are a good chance to blow your nose.
- Long after a passage has gone by, ask the conductor if your C# was in tune. This is especially effective if you had no C# or were not singing at the time.
- When possible, sing your part either an octave above or below what is written. This is excellent ear-training for the conductor. If he hears the pitch, deny it vehemently and claim that it must have been the combination tone.
- If you are singing in a language with which the conductor is the least bit unfamiliar, ask as many questions as possible about the meaning of individual words. If this fails, ask about the pronunciation of the most difficult words.
- Ask the conductor if he has listened to the von Karajan recording of the piece. Imply that he could learn a thing or two from it. Also good: ask, "Is this the first time you've conducted this piece?"
- Find an excuse to leave the rehearsal about 15 minutes early so that others will become restless and start to fidget.



Jannette Barrett Administrative Rescues

Are you struggling to use your
'Windows' home computer?

I will come to your home and assist you with:

- Email and Skype
- Internet searches
- Word documents
- Software and games
- Managing photographs
- and much more



Don't struggle alone: I have
35 years computer experience

Ph: 0405 182 741

Expert Secretarial Services also available with
Medical Terminology

Police Clearance available

Singing in Elizabethan England (1558 – 1603)

I noticed this in a book I am reading and thought it may be of interest to our choir. If MCCS was keen to go back in time to sing along with the musicians of Elizabethan England, you would have plenty of opportunities to join in.

However it may not be as easy as it is today. Music is not printed or written in the modern way. Although the notes are depicted in more or less the same form, there are no bar marks.

This makes it very difficult to play and sing in time together; especially because music books are not printed with all of the parts on the same page. They are designed to be dismantled and handed out to the various performers, who only have their own part. You cannot see what the other parts are doing.

And you thought that some of the music we sing was difficult!

Roger Palmer

Reference: Mortimer, Ian 2013, *The time traveller's guide to Elizabethan England*, Vintage Books, London.