

NOTES FROM THE TOP

Mandurah City Choral Society Newsletter | Summer edition 2016 | Editor Roger Palmer

President's Message

As another year draws to a close, we can be very proud of the wonderful concerts, camaraderie and achievements we have enjoyed. We held six performances, the opening of the Halls Head Shopping Centre in March, our very successful 25th Anniversary celebration in May, Come and Sing in June, the Proms in September where we shared the stage with GALS and SOS, a Dickens of a Christmas and the December Morning Melodies.

Thank you so much to the fabulous and incredibly talented and dedicated committee and everyone in the choir for the time and effort put into our performances. We are quite a team!!

Chris and Chris - words of thanks don't seem enough. MCCS is becoming more and more successful under your expert direction. We are so lucky to have you both in our choir.

As well as continuing with our singing schedule, we plan to have a slightly more corporate focus in 2017 where we will promote ourselves for hire at business and private functions. Please share our promotion leaflet with everyone you know.

To all our readers, have a wonderful Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. Thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to performing for you again next year.

Jannette Barrett
MCCS President



Music Director's Notes

To all involved with Mandurah City Choral Society, hearty thanks for another year of splendid singing and wonderful camaraderie!

Yesterday's performances as part of a professional ensemble Christmas Spectacular capped off a highly successful 25th Anniversary Year!

There have been many other highlights throughout the year, but our Proms concert and Dickens of a Christmas were standouts as far as I am concerned.

I have attempted to take you on this magic journey into the delights of choral music, and next year we will continue, with some exquisite places to visit! I feel privileged and proud to conduct such a hardworking and talented group, so I thank you all for your efforts in 2016, trust you will have a restful and joyous Christmas, and we will see you with all your renewed vigour on the 6th February next year, at Christ's Church!

Now bring me some figgy pudding!

Chris Ryland
Music Director



2017 Notices

Make sure you have these dates in your diary:

- **6 February:** First rehearsal back at Christ's Church
- **20 February:** AGM at 7pm prior to rehearsal at Christ's Church

Members farewell

As 2016 draws to a close we say farewell to two of your members, Denise Seinor and Don Bowes, who have both resettled in Perth.

We wish them well and hope to see them in the future as guest singers.



Meet a choir Member – Emma Catherine Cannon

Tea and Tie lady and First Soprano.

As told to the editor

I was born in Tunbridge Wells in Kent U.K., in 1964. and spent an idyllic childhood living in the village of Loose, 3k south of Maidstone also in Kent. My parents owned and ran the local Pub and I remember many happy times living here and frolicking to my heart's content in the countryside, usually tagging along behind my older brother.

Then it was off to boarding school, where despite appearing in every play I could, I managed not to waste all my parents hard earned money and passed the required exams. I only had thoughts of acting and auditioned for RADA, but the reality of earning a living prevailed and I attained a degree in Communication and Media studies.

While deciding what to do for a living, I married Jonathan, an Australian and worked as a secretary. After the birth of our daughter it dawned on me that teaching, with brilliant holidays, was my vocation! So it was back to university and my new career as an early years teacher.

Apart from singing in my local church choir, I spent many wonderful times singing with The Plaxtol Scholars. Invitations were always on hand and we toured around England singing for services in cathedrals around the country. I have a particular liking for early church music.

The editor can vouch for this as he has listened to two of the superb CD's produced by this choir.

But like so many before us, our lives changed with Western Australia beckoning. We arrived in May 2013, with dogs in tow, and being a country girl at heart, Pinjarra and the surrounding district was our first and only choice of life in Australia, though we had visited in 1986.

Since arriving I have made many friends through the choir and the local library, which has lead to a new hobby of bush walking. My gardening skills are tested in the Pinjarra sandy soil, but luckily friends are on hand to give advice. The welcome received from MCCA has ensured that your tea lady will be staying for the foreseeable future! My life continues happily in Pinjarra, Yunderup and Mandurah.

Emma Cannon

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Brenda Gurr AE

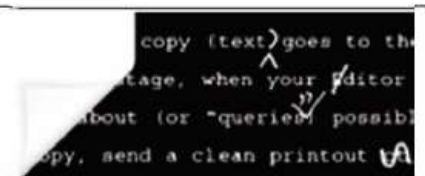
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Hearing to Sing

As audiologists, we are mainly concerned with frequencies between 256Hz (middle C on the piano) and 8000Hz (around the top note on the piano); these contain the major speech frequencies. The brain is very good at filling in the rest. However, this ignores the much wider spread of musical instruments and that their dynamic range from softest to loudest by far exceeds that of normal speech, even speech in the heat of the moment!

Human hearing ranges from 20 to 20,000Hz. Unfortunately, from the age of 24, we start to lose the very high frequencies and by 55, this will start to impact on the major speech range. Excessive noise will directly affect the higher major speech frequencies causing a significant hearing loss taking away sounds like 's' and 'f' and 'th'. This causes speech to be heard but not understood and lip reading; understanding context and increased listening effort are needed to converse in groups. Not only is communication affected by hearing loss; appreciation of music will also be affected losing the flutes, piccolos and some of the higher strings. The singing voice may be less affected but could affect pitch perception and put the singer out of harmony in a choir.

We think of typical noise exposure as due to gunfire; heavy duty machinery; chainsaws. However, in the orchestra, the brass instruments can belt out a pretty loud number into ears in front of them in the pit. Potentially, this can lead to irreversible damage to the cochlea. Hearing aids would then be required to assist with speech.

Some of the more advanced hearing aids also cope better with the range for music, compressing less and producing less noise to cloud the sound. Whilst they will help the hearing and not damage it further with selected amplification, hearing aids will not normally give hearing protection: that is the realm of ear muffs, plugs and the newer musician ear plugs, which filter the sound evenly to soften it rather than 'colour' it by attenuating different frequencies by differing amounts. A hearing check may help determine if there has been any loss due to noise and appropriate steps can be taken to stop the horse bolting even further. Visit www.isaudiologist.com.au for more.

Iain Summerlin



Iain Summerlin | MSc(Aud),
MAudA Audiologist

Suite 7, 19 Outram St, West Perth WA 6005

t: (08) 9481 0912 | f: (08) 9481 2824

e: reception@isaudiologist.com.au

w: www.isaudiologist.com.au





Singing for Wellbeing: Research finds choirs build community and wellbeing for seniors.

A Curtin University study has found that joining a community choir can give seniors much needed support and companionship, no matter how good or bad their singing voice.

Researcher Amanda Krause studied three Perth community choirs with participants aged over 65 and found the groups brought significant psychological benefits.

'Singing was important to these people, they enjoy this activity,' Dr Krause told 720 ABC Perth.

Beyond singing, the groups offered a valuable form of social support for the choir members, and alleviated loneliness in some.

'Specifically, the other people who were in the group with them were experiencing the same sorts of issues and problems,' Dr Krause said.

'They were facing diseases and hardships, and everybody was on the same page and could relate to one another.'

Listeners voice benefits of song

720 ABC Perth listeners agreed that singing in a group was a positive experience, regardless of their musical skills.

Talkback caller Claire said she was in a Noongar choir in Perth.

'I love singing Noongar songs, I love learning the language,' she said.

'It releases a bit of the pain our Aboriginal people are in, and singing the language feels very powerful and unifying.'

Caller David moved to Perth from Sydney eight years and joined a community group in Rockingham after finding he was lonely.

'We get together every week and put on concerts,' he said.

'It gets you out of your day-to-day issues.'

Christine wrote on Facebook:

'It's the best thing I did when I moved to Perth from a small country town to start a new life with my new husband.'

'The choir I joined has become a family to me and improved my life 100 per cent.'

Anyone can sing

While the benefits of being in a choir could apply to any kind of communal activity, singing is particularly accessible as it does not require any specialist equipment or training.

'What is great about singing is that it doesn't require anything beyond your own voice, which is something that we all have and can use,' Dr Krause said.

'So it is a cheap and effective way to bring positive energy and positive experiences into people's lives.'

Jannette Barrett
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On Christmas Eve,
Scrooge was visited
by Marley's ghost...

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Believe It Or Not

The following anecdotes form the basis for this edition's competition. Your mission, should you choose to accept it and win a bottle of wine, is to determine who the choir member is and which of these stories are true and which are false. Entries should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief, 'Notes From The Top' by email at nrpalmer@iinet.net.au

1. When I was 12 and my younger brother 10, Dad bought us each a Daisy air rifle. One day, for a prank, we collected cow pads and put them on a small Buddhist shrine near our house to use as target practice. Then off we went with our air guns. A short distance away, my airgun discharged accidentally, shooting the small cupped lead pellet at my brother which injured his left eye.
2. One day, returning from one of his regular forest inspections, Dad presented me with a small rhesus monkey, which became my pet. It loved bananas, hated oranges, and terrorised my mother. It went everywhere on my shoulder and, when the air raid siren sounded, it would shin down from its pole house and hide terrified in its own air raid shelter until the all clear sounded.
3. I was 16 when dad took me hunting in the jungle. Though I had never shot anything bigger than a rabbit, we carried high velocity rifles, hoping for bigger game. I had become separated from Dad when from a few meters away, out of dense undergrowth, a huge buffalo charged me head down. My panicked shot dropped the buffalo at my feet and the recoil landed me on my back.
4. It was every fisherman's dream to catch a tailor weighing over 10lb. Early one morning, I walked out on Cottesloe's Cable Station reef to try out a new rod and reel. It was my first time on this reef and I was to catch not just a 10lb tailor, but two weighing over 20lb. One weighed eleven and a quarter and the other nine and three quarters, not exactly two ten pounders, but a great catch.
5. When my wife and I were hippies in the seventies, we planted an enormous organic veggie garden in our beach sand back yard. We imported every kind of manure and mulch - council lawn clippings, piggery poo, trailer loads of composted seaweed, and night soil from the local sewerage works. Our veggies included a 4.5lb beetroot and silver beet leaves over 3 feet high.





Editor's Comments

With the Southern Hemisphere Summer Solstice, which this year falls on Wednesday, 21 December 2016 at 6:44 pm, comes the summer edition of your newsletter.

I have made a unilateral decision that it is my duty as your editor to write something controversial in these comments. However, MCCS is such a well run choir that it is difficult to find anything that will raise eyebrows.

Now here's an idea. From time to time, I overhear comments from experienced members of the choir. One thing that I heard discussed recently was that we should always warm up and practice before a concert in a separate area away from our audience. I wonder if the opposite was also true. Would it be interesting to show how we practice, to the right audience of course? Perhaps a club or retirement village. For instance, the various sections of the choir could sing their part and then show how the whole lot comes together. Even though I love singing the songs we do, I have also heard that the choice of some of our music does not suit the taste of a lot of potential local paying audiences. Perhaps we need a bigger repertoire including popular musicals. I know of many other local choirs who sing less difficult songs in unison and are busy performing each week. I don't think we should try to be like that, but perhaps we could be both. I hope this will provoke some 'Letters to the Editor'.

If not this certainly will!

This story qualifies for a choir newsletter, firstly because it is true and secondly because it has musical content. Coral Woodhead, being a Harvey girl, will vouch for this story. Some of you may know a place called Mornington Mill, in the hills at the back of Harvey. My brother and I remember our father telling us that in its heyday it was run with an iron fist by a man called *Big Harry Smith*. His descendants still live in Harvey. Big Harry would not allow liquor or women of ill repute into the town. To this day, if you know where to look you can find the ruins of four cottages connected at one time by a well-worn track through the bush to the town. The banned items were to be found in abundance here and a character called *Kelly the Mugran* the establishment. A stream ran alongside the cottages and fossickers are said to have found items such as liquor and perfume bottles along with other rubbish in the water. And the musical relevance? Well, no doubt the men amused themselves at night by sitting around the campfire singing campfire songs!

Roger Palmer
Editor



Out of the mouths of babes

On our recent trip to visit our Grandchildren we learnt the following.

1. No matter how hard you try, you can't baptise cats.
2. When your mum is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair.
3. If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
4. Never ask your three year old brother to hold a tomato.
5. You cant trust dogs to watch your food.
6. Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
7. Never hold a Dust-Buster and a cat at the same time.
8. You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
9. Don't wear polka-dot underwear under white shorts.
10. The best place to be when you're sad is Grandma's lap

