

M NOTES FROM THE TOP

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

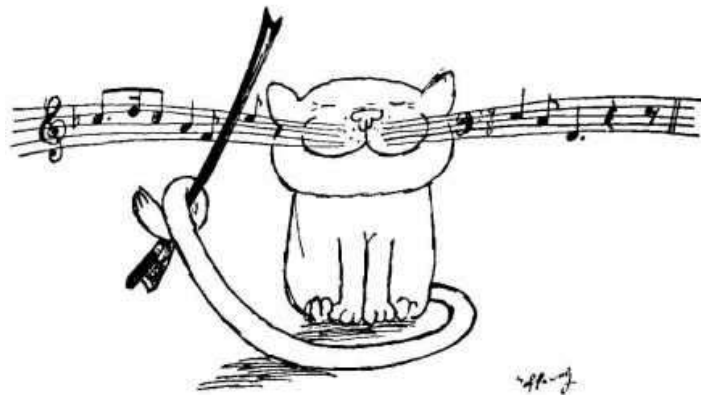
President's Message

Hearty congratulations to everyone who performed at the 2016 Proms celebrating the diversity in our community. MCCS was joined by the Mandurah Festival Orchestra, the Gay and Lesbian Singers of WA and the Spirit of the Streets choir for this event. The rich tapestry of performers included an age range from early teens to 80's, all levels of employment, people from the GLBTI community as well as from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. However, regardless of our diversity, the common thread felt at the concert was our love of singing or playing in an orchestra and the feeling of belonging. Our performance concluded with a 100 voice finale with the orchestra which no doubt had our audience humming all the way home. Thank you so much to MPAC, the orchestra and to Christopher Ryland who pulled it all together.

Looking ahead, MCCS will be 'Singing in the City' on October 16 then gearing up for our Christmas events in December which include: the Friends of MPAC concert on 4th, our Christmas concert on 7th and performing at the MPAC Morning Melodies on 14th.

Everyone has worked so hard this year. Please give yourselves a huge and well-deserved pat on the back

Jannette Barrett
MCCS President



Music Director's Notes

Well, by the time that you get to read this newsletter, our Proms concert will be well and truly over. I believe that music making is such fun and that an important reward for our efforts is in giving pleasure to an audience like the appreciative crowd on Sunday.

There are, however, great personal rewards on offer as well, especially when we realise that we have contributed to a huge team effort and that we have mastered some tricky, but hauntingly beautiful music - music that stays with one forever. Thank you to everyone who took part in last Sunday's concert. It was a great experience for all.

Chris Ryland
Music Director



Current Events

MCCS have a few events coming up:

- 16 October: Perth Singing in the City
- 7 December: Christmas Concert – 'A Dickens of a Christmas'

For more details on any of our events please see our website: www.mandurahchoral.org.au

New Members

Welcome to the following choristers who have joined our ranks. We hope your singing is harmonious and your stay a long one.

Coral Woodhead, Susan Price, Margaret Laasonen, Joanne Wood and Henry Horne. If you feel you have missed out on a welcome let me know.

What's on at MPAC

2 October	Michael Griffiths
6 October	Footloose
22 October	Terrain – Bengara Dance Theatre

Tickets at the Mandurah Performing Arts box office. www.manpac.com.au





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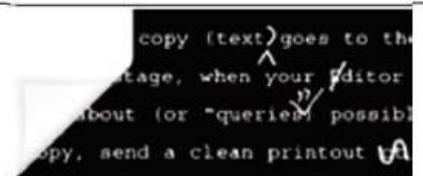
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Singing is in our DNA. Human beings sang before they spoke. We should all sing more.

Recently, I had a wonderful experience at a public school in Sydney working over the period of a week with over a thousand children from Kindergarten to Grade Six. The school was Epping West Primary School, and the standard of singing was excellent.

Here is a school where children sing naturally, normally, not shouting but singing with beautiful pure tone. Every class sang. The two choirs were also outstanding. Every class had many children who had either recently arrived from troubled parts of the world whose parents had been born in other parts of the world. Every class had a teacher who cared deeply about the children and who realised the power of a child's imagination and the value of creativity generated through music.

Many of the children were learning English from scratch. It was heart-warming to see how they dealt with the songs and the rhymes and how they enjoyed singing together even if most of the words were strange. They were united in song irrespective of race, colour or creed. If every child in Australia had an opportunity to learn music through singing my view is that we would see more happier and productive children. Most of the essential musical concepts can be taught through singing, and most people can make a vocal sound of some description. Singing is in our DNA. Human beings sang before they spoke. Many species of the animal kingdom communicate with a song. He who said: 'I'd like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony', had a good idea.

Let's do it.

*Dr. Richard Gill OAM
Conductor and music educator*



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Name that chorister



In keeping with the choral theme of this newsletter, you are invited to have a close look at this photograph of a choir. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to correctly identify the full name and position in the photo of at least one person and name the year in which it was taken.

Assume **the top left person is number one and the bottom right person is number fifty from the camera's perspective.** This competition is restricted to fully paid up MCCA members. The first correct email entry received by the editor after publication, will win a bottle of fine wine as a prize. Any innovative entries will be looked upon favourably. Only one entry per person will be considered. The winner will be announced at the next appropriate choir practice.



Precisely how our vocal cords produce the high and low notes needed for singing has been modelled for the first time on computer.



The model shows how layers of tissues inside the cords, also called vocal folds, respond to being stretched by the muscles of the larynx — the process known to give us the ability to sing different pitches. In a live animal or a **living human, you can't go inside the vocal fold and look at the tissue and how it behaves, so you have to model it,** said co-author Dr Tobias Riede from Midwestern University in Arizona. The challenge is to replicate the unique structure of the cord, which is designed to respond to and also withstand the physical stress of stretching and **vibration. 'No other part in the body is exposed to these kinds of stresses,'** he said. **'The vocal fold and larynx is a very unique organ. This is why although it has been known since the 1970s that the vocal cords were made up of layers of tissue their function had been difficult to study in action, he said.**

Dr Riede and colleagues developed a computer model for the vocal cords and ran millions of simulations to understand how this complex, layered structure delivers such a wide range of pitches. They found that as vocal cords are stretched by the muscles of the larynx, some layers become stiffer and stop vibrating, leaving the more pliable layers to vibrate and deliver a sound. The greater the stretch, the greater the number of layers which tighten up and the fewer layers there are to vibrate, effectively making the vocal cord thinner and therefore a creating higher-pitched sound.

Previously the mechanism by which vocal folds could sing as many different notes as a many-stringed instrument — like a piano — **had been something of a puzzle. 'In a guitar you have six strings but in the vocal fold you kind of have one string which becomes smaller and smaller and smaller the more you stretch it,'** Dr Riede said. The researchers found that the same model could be used to explain why other animals, such as the tiger, rhesus monkey, rat and deer produce different ranges of sound.

While an individual's general range is decided by genetics, the study suggests that vocal exercises can help to expand and **maintain that range. 'Predisposition is also important, so not everybody can be Joan Sutherland,'** Dr Riede said. **'But of course vocal exercise does have an effect.'** He said this would mean the vocal cord layers in a teacher who uses their voice everyday would look different to those of a person who barely talks. Dr Riede said the new discovery could help to restore vocal abilities in people whose larynx had been damaged by diseases such as cancer. This damage is sometimes too severe to be repaired.

With a greater understanding of how their structure works, instead of trying to repair damaged vocal cords, surgeons could one day replace them with **lab-grown alternatives. 'There have been a couple of studies in the last six months where researchers have tried to grow a vocal fold in a dish,'** Dr Riede said.

**D&A
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Life Is Music, Music Is Life

Let me introduce myself. My name is Neb, and I am the wife of Chris, your music director. I am a teacher, a cat lover and a mad Whovian. I first discovered the bassoon 18 years ago and instantly fell in love with it. The bassoon is a double reed woodwind instrument, and its music is written mainly in the bass clef. I love the smooth, mellow sound, even though it is often referred to as the clown of the orchestra.

While I am mainly self-taught, I have had lessons with my friend and mentor, Fran Tempest, who played with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for many years. I have had the privilege of playing with the Rusty Orchestra alongside the professional musicians, and I hope to repeat this experience next year. I am looking forward to playing in the Mandurah Festival Orchestra again this year, and being a part of such a wonderful experience for local Mandurah people.

Neb Ryland

Editors note. A Whovian to the uninitiated, is a fan of Doctor Who.



Seeing to sing

Visual requirements for music can demand different solutions from normal spectacles. The height and focal length of your music, in particular, may alter your near vision needs as well as simultaneously needing to keep the director/audience in focus. The focal length to your music, is essential for your optometrist to know as **near powers may vary several steps from your 'normal' reading powers. Similarly important is the angle/height of your music.** It would be useful to take some music to your appointment to show size and position to your practitioner. It is also prudent to keep the near segment fairly high to avoid having a strong down gaze/eyes on the music and not on the director.

Possible **solutions will vary according to the individual's age and needs. People less than 45 years may only need single vision general spectacles.** Older musicians may well need correction for near and distance. Possible solutions can be look-over near spectacles, bifocals, trifocals or multifocals depending on your script. Multifocals have a fairly narrow band of intermediate focus. Any of the above will need the centration on the frame considered for the height.

When choosing frames, it is useful to note that metal frames with pads can be adjusted on the face a little higher or lower to cater for individual needs. An anti-reflection coating is also useful to include if you are working under bright lights. Pathology such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration may mean getting enlarged **copies of the music. This also makes it easy to 'gloss' along and not have to concentrate on the reading in a distracted way.** Of course, it is possible your current spectacles may cover your needs.

If you would like to chat about any of these aspects, feel free to ring on 9457 720.

John R. Newing

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Editor's Comments

With the Southern Hemisphere Vernal Equinox, which this year falls on Thursday, 22 September 2016 at 10:21 PM AWST, comes the spring edition of your newsletter. As I write these comments, my suspicions are that this may be the shortest newsletter produced so far. I am relying on contributions from members and am determined to allow you to fill these pages as you see fit without harrying from me. So be it!

Do you make a difference? Maybe? Sometimes? Your voice added to the MCCS chorus hopefully makes a **harmonious difference but it is rewarding for members to make a difference in other ways. You don't particularly** have to join the committee to make a difference. Have you thought about that new choir member struggling with a difficult piece, particularly something our music director has given us to stretch our capabilities? What a difference it makes to encourage those of us who are less capable of reading music fluently. Our choir is not only a professional music body but also a social entity and simply talking to someone different at half time, or offering to help a committee member can make a difference. Maybe? Sometimes?

And to inspire you to even greater singing heights:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt 1910

Oh, and just to let you know, MCCS has been invited to sing at one of Perth's most prestigious magnificent buildings on an important occasion next year. Keep 8 April 2017 free for the chance of a lifetime.

Roger Palmer
Editor

Tenores

At a recent choir practice one of our tenors was heard to remark that their genre had been neglected in this newsletter. Never let it be said! No more will they be overlooked! While they are of undoubted quality their numbers are reduced and they could easily be overwhelmed by the basses, perhaps even the altos or the sopranos. But just what is a tenor? Well, as our Latin scholars will tell you, the word comes from the Latin, tenor, or plural tenores, and has the same derivation as teneo, to hold; no doubt pertaining to being able to hold the correct note.

However, more exactly, a tenor is a type of classical male singing voice whose vocal range is one of the highest of the male voice types. It is also used to refer to singers of that voice type. The tenor's vocal range lies between C3, the C one octave below middle C, and A4, the A above middle C. In solo work, this range extends up to C5, or "tenor high C". The low extreme for tenors is roughly A \flat 2. At the highest extreme, some tenors can sing up to two Fs above middle C. The tenor voice type is generally divided into the leggero tenor, lyric tenor, spinto tenor, dramatic tenor, heldentenor, and tenor buffo or spieltenor.

Believe it or not, these are the top ten reasons for being one of the above.

1. Tenors get high without drugs
2. Name a musical where the Bass got the girl.
3. You can show the Sopranos how it should be sung
4. Did you ever hear of anyone paying \$1000 for a ticket to see the 3 Basses?
5. **Who needs brains when you've got resonance?**
6. Tenors never have to waste time looking through the self-improvement section of the bookstore.
7. You get to sing along with John Denver singing High Calypso.
8. When you get really good at falsetto, you can make tons of money doing voice-overs for cartoon characters.
9. Gregorian chant was practically invented for Tenors. Nobody invented a genre for Basses.
10. You can entertain your friends by impersonating Mario Lanza singing the drinking song in The Student Prince.