



**Notes from the President.** This is an especially busy time for the choir. Many of us were privileged to have been a part of the wonderful experience of singing at the Conservatorium, we have now performed our own concert at the Cardinal Cerretti Chapel to a sell-out audience, we have the Fortieth Anniversary Dinner coming up shortly, and a number of the choir will be joining the Prime Minister for the Australia Remembers Commemorative Service later this month.



I won't dwell on these, as they are covered separately in this issue. However, all these events run smoothly and seamlessly because behind the scenes a host of people give their time, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to make it all work. So, thank you all for the many various contributions that you have made.

After this flurry of activity we can move on to enjoying the magnificent music of Mozart. The Great C Minor Mass ranks as one of his greatest achievements. The audience, and ourselves, are in for a real treat.

**Meet a member**—or in this case, two members.

**Joan Sample** has been a member of the Choir since 1996. She moved here from the Northumbrian village of Warkworth, where she had been a member of a thriving local choir and of a madrigal group, singing classical works and operetta. She has vivid memories of singing the Fauré Requiem to celebrate the Parish Church's 1,250th anniversary, and of one not-so-serious concert, being one of the Mikado's Three Little Maids alongside one of the tenors, totally in character with his costume including wig, gymslip and fishnet tights.

**Fiona Sample**, Joan's daughter, came here from London, having sung in the London Symphony Chorus for some years. She has recently been reminded of those years on two counts. Firstly she met Beverley Thirkell, a new member of the M W Choir, who lived in the same area of London and sang in the London Philharmonia Chorus at the same time. They discovered that they had had their first babies at the same time in the same hospital, and that they had sung in the same BBC Promenade concert when the two choirs joined forces. Secondly, Fiona recently bought CD's of the German Requiem and the Haydn Nelson Mass, on which, on some reflection, she reckons she must be singing in the chorus.

The Sample family, including Brian, Joans' husband and Fiona's father, are great supporters of the Choir, and of Carlos and Alexandra. They unassumingly do a lot of valuable work behind the scenes, for which we are all very grateful.

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by Naomi Roseth



**A note from your editors.** Contributions to Noteworthy are very welcome.

We are happy to accept full articles and/or leads to interesting stories.

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## Forty Years On—A Potted History of the Manly Warringah Choir

In this our fortieth anniversary year, Naomi Roseth has been digging in the archives.  
This is some of what she found.

The Manly Warringah Musical Society was established in 1975, with choral works featuring in programs for the first time in December 1976. Two choristers who sang with the Choir at its inaugural concert are still with the Choir in 2015: May Mackenzie and John Killick. We salute them.

Since its establishment, the Choir has performed the works of 46 composers. Of those thirteen, even if born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have composed in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Five of those are living now. The Choir has never sung the composition of a woman. Is it time to change that? It will come as no surprise that Mozart is the Choir's favourite composer: We have sung eight different pieces by him.

We have sung Handel's Messiah fourteen times – more than any other piece. The next most frequently performed piece is Mozart's Ave Verum (nine times) and excerpts from Bach's Christmas Oratorio and Fauré's Requiem (seven times each). We have performed 36 pieces only once.

While we sing mostly in English and Latin, over the years we have also sung in German, French, Spanish, Catalanian, Hebrew and Russian.

Carlos Alvarado took over as the Choir's director in May 2003 and at the time of writing has conducted the Choir in 24 concerts. Before Carlos took over, the Choir performed under the baton of a range of conductors, the names of fourteen appearing in past programs. The stability we enjoy under Carlos' baton is greatly valued, as is his wonderful ability to share his musicianship with such a diverse group of people.



Angela has been the Choir's accompanying pianist since June 1991, first as Angela Gates and since September 2001 as Angela Ferguson.

An inspection of past programs reveals a long list of soloists who accompanied the Choir. Two names stand out: Rita Hunter sang excerpts from Messiah in December 1988; Brett Weymark, now Director of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, sang Messiah twice: in 1998 and 2000, and he sang Mozart's Requiem in May 1999. The Choir prides itself in giving young singers performing opportunities which open doors to wider pastures: Emma Moore and Pascal Herrington are now singing in Vienna and Berlin. Alexander Knight and Michael Honeyman sing regularly with Opera Australia.

Since its inception, the Choir had four presidents who are still in the Choir: Joe Micali, Pat Hughes, Marj Binns and Richard Griffiths. Three former secretaries are still members: Jill Selles, Jenny Beck and Margaret Dent, and Gill Gray is a past Treasurer.

Since November 1994 the Choir has been fortunate enough to perform regularly at the Cardinal Cerretti Chapel, St Patrick Estate, Manly. Before that we had performed in a range of locations including churches, schools, community centres and retirement villages. We performed seven times at the Glen Street Theatre in Belrose and three times at the Dee Why RSL. The Choir rarely performs outside the Northern Beaches. We have performed once at the Sydney Conservatorium, also once in Gosford and in Wollongong and five times at St Mary's Church in North Sydney.

Now we look forward to the next 40 years—who knows what they might hold?

### Dates for your diary

#### Rehearsals

7.30pm on Thursdays at Collaroy Plateau PS.

#### May 27 40th Anniversary Dinner

6.30pm for 7.00pm at Dee Why RSL

**May 29 Australia Remembers Commemoration**  
10.00am North Head Fort

#### August 16 MWC 40th Anniversary Gala Concert

Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto

(Soloist Gregory Kinda)

Mozart: Mass in C minor (The Great)

## Oh, what a night!

Anne Scollon (Tenor) reflects on the experience of singing in the Australian Premiere of Granados' Song of the Stars at the Sydney Conservatorium



What a wonderful experience to sing in the Verbruggen Hall at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. It was extra special as it was the Australian Premier of Granados recently found work – *Cant de les Estrelles - The Song of the Stars*. The work is the subject of research by Conservatorium lecturer **Carolina Estrada** forming part of her PhD thesis. So it was a great honor when she asked Carlos if Manly Warringah Choir could be part of her special night.

For the work we were divided into two choirs. It was somewhat disconcerting to see our five Tenors (50% of us) cross the floor and form Choir II. All parts were split forming choirs II and III. The Conservatorium High School Junior Choir magnificently formed Choir I for the night. The Composer used three choirs in order to achieve a 'polychoral spatial' effect (separate choirs singing in alternation). The piano and organ parts together formed an integral part of the ensemble.

It was fun at rehearsals, singing in separate choirs. It must have been hard for Carlos to locate us in our new positions. Most nights we would return to our regular places to continue with Haydn's Mass.

But the concert night was for Carolina. The hall was packed despite the shocking weather. There were many acknowledgements including the support she received from Carlos. And the good news is that she came back to play the piano when we sang once again *Cant de les Estrelles* at our concert performance on May 9<sup>th</sup>. When asked why choose Sydney when she left Barcelona, her response was - she loved to travel and that the Sydney Conservatorium of Music has a reputation of being the best! How lucky are we! Thank you Carlos and Carolina for giving us such a wonderful experience.



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## Music which was nearly lost

A story of early copyright infringement

Having just sung a work which was nearly lost for all time, here is the story of another potential loss for common people, which was foiled by a budding young musician. Naomi Roseth read about it in Howard Goodall's book "Big Bang".

Around 1640 the Italian composer Gregorio Allegri wrote a piece for a nine-part choir: *Miserere Mei, Deus*. It is one of the most famous and beautiful of all sacred vocal works. Listen to it on YouTube. You will recognize its haunting, touching melody. What makes the work so distinctive is the phrases sung by one of the two boy sopranos, soaring high up into the stratosphere, touching a top C.

Pope Urban VIII considered the work so spiritual and powerful that he insisted that only his personal Sistine Chapel Choir should be allowed to sing it and only once a year during Holy Week. The copies of the music were locked in the Vatican's vaults for the rest of the year.

The prohibition on disseminating the piece was strictly observed until 1770 when a precocious fourteen-year old heard it once, memorized all thirteen minutes of the piece and copied it out for all to see and freely enjoy. Guess who that precocious boy was? Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart of course!

## Reaching for the stars

Here are some comments made by members of the audience after the concert.

- “Great soloists—how nice to have a strong Mezzo and soloists who sing so well together.”
- “It was lovely to see Alexandra leading the orchestra again!”
- “I thought the first half was good, but then you sang the Haydn Mass which was just lovely.”
- “We are so lucky to have the Manly Warringah Choir as part of our community.”
- “The choir sounded wonderful and did justice to the inspiring music.”
- “What a fabulous concert! I’d like to book for your next concert now, please.”



“And that pianist—  
(Carolina Estrada)  
she was brilliant!”

## Music in unlikely places

Most of us have heard of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, comprised of musicians of Palestinian and Israeli extraction, conducted by Daniel Barenboim and set up to promote understanding between young people in the two countries. Likewise, you may have seen an article about the Opera Company in the Ukrainian town of Donetsk, which carries on performing despite the hostilities between warring factions. If you have not, you may be inspired by reading it, and viewing the wonderful photos, at: <http://uaposition.com/donetsk-opera-house-tanks-on-the-street-but-the-show-must-go-on/>

The Sydney Morning Herald has also reported recently on a music school in impoverished, war-torn Gaza strip. Established in 2008, the Gaza Music School has steadily gained in popularity, serving as a release and distraction in times of hardship. This despite three wars in six years.

More than 250 students apply to the conservatory each year; between 30 and 40 gain places. The staff of 13 gives lectures on music theory, individual lessons and instruction for a range of groups from small ensembles to a near-full orchestra.

The conservatory is housed in a single floor of a non-descript building owned by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Tel al-Hawa, a middle class neighbourhood in Gaza city. It is barely noticeable from the outside. On the inside, the walls are lined with posters of Arab and Western musicians – Tchaikovsky next to Kamal Al Taweel, a renowned Egyptian composer. The classrooms are a hive of activity as dozens of students are put through their paces. The school bought most of its instruments in Egypt or Syria or received them as donations from Belgium’s Music Fund.

A performance of the conservatory band participating in the ‘Arabs Got Talent’ show in Beirut in February has been watched on YouTube more than eight millions times. The band, consists of voice, zither, lute, drum and wooden flute performers. The performance of a traditional Arabic song left the judges and audience weeping.

## A Reminder

(Just in case it’s needed)

**The Choir celebrates its 40th Anniversary with a Gala Concert on  
Sunday afternoon August 16th at the Cardinal Cerretti Chapel.**

The programme features a double bill:

**Beethoven: Piano Concerto No 4 with Gregory Kinda as Soloist  
Mozart: Mass in C minor (The Great)**

Light refreshments will be served on the Terrace after the concert.