

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir

Newsletter No 85 October 2024



Singer of the Year 2024

Patrons who attended the choir's 31st Singer of the Year competition were left in no doubt about the quality of the finalists (together with their brilliant accompanist Konrad Olszewski) and of the concert by the men of the

Melbourne Welsh Male Choir.



Once again, the audience was treated to a veritable smorgasbord of classical songs chosen by the finalists (ranging from Mozart, Stravinsky, Puccini Massenet and Weber) to the choir's component including Welsh hymns and anthems, a Maori lullaby - *Hine e hine*, an Italian lament - Verdi's *Va Pensiero* (sung in its native language) and the powerful *Prayer* from Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*.

The warm applause from the audience in the comfortable environment of MLC's auditorium rewarded a wonderful afternoon of music from all the performers.

The winner of the 2024 Singer of the Year as announced by our distinguished chief adjudicator *Margaret Arnold* was soprano *Esther Counsel*.



Singer of the Year winner Esther Counsel with the Choir's president Kevin Seerup and Music Director Mitch Meyer

Melbourne Club Concert - 13th September 2024

As mentioned in our last newsletter, following the choir's performance at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, we were invited to perform at the prestigious Melbourne Club in Collins Street, for a dinner which included members of that club's own inhouse choral group.

Thus, it was with some trepidation that we entered the beautiful dining room at this historic club. However, the enthusiastic applause from the diners at the end of the choir's last bracket of songs reflected their enjoyment of the choir's performance.

We look forward to a return engagement.

Upcoming choir commitments

Choir's 40th Anniversary Dinner

We will be holding a fortieth anniversary dinner on Saturday 16th November 2024, to which all previous choristers are invited, which promises to be a great night.

A history of the choir together with reminiscences from current and former members of their favourite choir memories, of both local and overseas events, will be among the highlights of the evening.

We will have three of choir's former MD's - Doug Heywood, Lucas De Jong and David Ashton-Smith as panellists for a Q&A session, together with much more. It promises to be a great evening!



Choir Christmas Concert 2024

November 30th at 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

St Alfred's Anglican Church

107 Springfield Road,

Blackburn North, 3130

Come along for a wonderful afternoon of carols both new and old in this beautiful modern church setting.

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.

Wonthaggi Christmas Concert

December 7, 2024

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre

96 Graham Street.

Wonthaggi 3995.



The choir is returning to Wonthaggi this year for our *Christmas in Wonthaggi Concert*.

Afternoon tea is included with booking (held during interval).

Tickets are available via *Trybooking*.

A new song for the choir - *Anfonaf Angel*

A new song for the choir, which we sing in the “language of heaven”, is the beautiful ballad *Anfonaf Angel*.

The composer Robat Arwyn is from Ruthin, North Wales, and is best known for his many Welsh-language songs. His notable compositions include the songs *Anfonaf Angel* and *Benedictus*, both of which are in the Melbourne Welsh Choir’s repertoire.

Arwyn was born in Talysarn, in the Nantlle valley, under the name Robert Arwyn Jones, and studied Music at Cardiff University before qualifying as a librarian at College of Librarianship in Wales at Aberystwyth. He went on to be chief librarian at Denbighshire Libraries for 20 years.

Arwyn's rock opera, *Ceidwad y Gannwyll*, with libretto by Robin Llwyd ab Owain, was performed at the National Eisteddfod at Rhyl in 1985. His composition, *Atgof o'r Sêr*, was commissioned for the Denbighshire National Eisteddfod, where it was performed by Bryn Terfel, Fflur Wyn and Côr Rhuthun.

Anfonaf Angel, which he wrote in 2008 with Hywel Gwynfryn, has since been recorded by many artists, including Ffion Hâf, Trio, Elgan Llyr Thomas, Rhys Meirion, Piantel and the London Welsh Male Voice Choir.

[Opera star Bryn Terfel recorded an English version of the song to help raise funds for the Air Ambulance lifesaving charity’s £600,000 appeal. The track, *Guardian Angel* was launched in April 2012. The Welsh version sold out when it was released in May 2011.

Terfel said: “A song called Angel seemed a perfect birthday present; the angel is the helicopter.

I think it is shocking that the Air Ambulance isn’t funded. “I come from just outside Caernarfon (where the North Wales ambulance is based) and I would often hear the red helicopter flying over our house”. “One day a few years ago, I followed its flight path to Caernarfon Airport. When I stood there watching it land, I found myself thinking - why doesn’t anyone know about this? And I went along and offered to get involved when they told me it costs £1,500 per mission.”

“The helicopters save time and save lives, and this really hit home when I went back to my wife Lesley and the kids.”]

Anfonaf Angel

Mae hymian hwyr y ddinas yn fy neffro
Am eiliad, rwyf yn credu dy fod yno
A chlywaf alaw isel, dy lais yn galw'n dawel
Anfonaf angel, i dy warchod di

Anfonaf angel, i dy warchod heno
Anfonaf angel, i'th gysuro di
Mae sŵn dy lais yn ddigon, i chwalu'r holl amheuon
Anfonaf angel atat ti

Ac ambell waith, yng nghanol berw bywyd
Rwy'n teimlo'n unig ac yn isel hefyd
Ond pan wyf ar fy nglinia', fe welaf drwy fy nagra'
A chofio'r geiria' ddywedaist wrtha' i

Anfonaf angel, i dy warchod heno
Anfonaf angel, i'th gysuro di
Mae sŵn dy lais yn ddigon, i chwalu'r holl amheuon
Anfonaf angel atat ti



Ti yw yr angel sydd yma yn wastadol,
yn gofalu amdanaf, lle bynnag y byddaf
Ti yw fy angel, fy angel gwarcheidiol
Dw i'n cofio'r geiria' ddywedaist wrtha' i

Anfonaf angel, i dy warchod heno
Anfonaf angel i'th gysuro di
Mae sŵn dy lais yn ddigon, i chwalu'r holl amheuon
Anfonaf angel atat ti

Anfonaf angel, i dy warchod heno
Anfonaf angel i'th gysuro di
Mae sŵn dy lais yn ddigon, i chwalu'r holl amheuon
Anfonaf angel atat ti
Anfonaf angel atat ti

English Translation

The late humming of the city wakes me
For a second, I believe that you're with me,
And I hear the quiet melody of your voice saying softly
I'll send an angel to protect you

I send an angel to protect you tonight
I'll send an angel to console you
The sound of your voice is enough to remove all doubt
I send an Angel to you

From time to time, when life gets overwhelming
I feel lonely and sad
And when I'm on my knees, I see through my tears
And remember the words you said to me

I send an angel to protect you tonight
I'll send an angel to console you
The sound of your voice is enough to remove all doubt
I send an Angel to you

You are the angel that's always beside me
Caring, wherever I'll be
You are my angel, my guardian angel
I remember the words you said to me

I send an angel to protect you tonight
I'll send an angel to console you
The sound of your voice is enough to remove all doubt
I send an Angel to you

New Chorister Profile - Tenor - Anthony (Tony) Hoseman

We were more than a little surprised when a recent recruit nominated to do his choir audition after just two rehearsals and passed with flying colours!

OK, we know that Ieuan Thomas and Bill Spawton are good mentors and teachers but are they really that good!

However, when you hear of Tony's music biography, it all makes sense.



Tony lives with his wife Lucy in East Warburton. They have 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

Being of Dutch heritage, Tony is very proud of his garden; indeed, they have counted 38 different bird species that visit their premises regularly.

As a hobby Tony grows North American medicinal herbs such as *golden seal* (for the relief of colds and other respiratory tract infections), *black cohosh* (which is used for treating menopausal problems), *bloodroot* (used in blood purification, wound healing and pain relief and as an antiplaque additive in toothpaste and mouthwash), and *bearberry* (used as a urinary tract antibacterial).

Tony's family migrated from Holland in 1953, and Tony duly arrived as a dinky-di Aussie in 1955.

An accomplished musician, Tony has played cornet and tenor horn with several bands, including Williamstown City and Nunawading City Brass

Bands.

In addition, he has sung with several choirs:

- As a youth in a church choir.
- *Melbourne Male Choir* for 32 years and is a life member and vice president.
- *Chime* - a Melbourne-based community choir that has toured internationally (where he sang for a period of 15 years and is a former president).
- *The Carols by Candlelight Choir* (which is conducted by a former Music Director of our choir - Doug Heywood).
- *1000 Voice Choir* - part of the *Born to Sing Choir*.

Tony has performed in musical theatre and on performing arts stages appearing in approximately 50 productions, (some with the choir's current president - Kevin Seerup!).

He also performed as a Singing Waiter for 8 years and has been a full-time entertainer for a couple of decades, performing around 4000 concerts for Seniors groups, etc.,

After such an exhausting musical and gardening career does he have time for any other interests and hobbies?

Yes, he of course he does!

Tony is very much into coin and stamp collecting, bushwalking, and card playing.

He has (surprise, surprise) a collection of vinyl records of 1000-voice male choirs.

But he still finds time for water fights with the grandchildren!

Tony does not have any Welsh heritage, but he is appreciating the companionship shown to him, to date, from our members.

Welcome Tony, we hope you enjoy your time in the tenor section

Want to join our choir

As can be seen from above life is never dull for members of the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir with so much fabulous music to sing and interesting concerts venues to perform in, so why not join us.

Whether you've been involved in music all your life, sing in another choir, or only sing in the shower, just come along to our rehearsals at Maroondah Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood and join in the fun and the stimulating learning process, that being a part of the *Melbourne Welsh Male Choir* is all about.

The choir is open to people of all ages from 18 to 88 of any nationality, age, colour or ethnicity.

Our current and past members include people with Scots, English, Irish, New Zealand, Dutch, French, German, Egyptian, Latvian, South African, Tongan, Samoan, American and Australian ancestry.

So, provided you pass a relatively simple audition, you will be made most welcome.

While our musical heritage is Welsh and we aim to have Welsh songs as roughly a quarter of our concert repertoire (not necessarily all in the Welsh language), we are fundamentally a multicultural choir with less than half of us having any direct Welsh ancestry.

We have an excellent rehearsal facility at Maroondah Federation Estate, with a grand piano, comfortable seats, good acoustics and facilities for tea and coffee at the interval.

In addition, we have possibly the best music director and accompanist combination in Melbourne.

Mitch Meyer, our new Music Director, has a background in music and management. He is an accomplished soloist as well as being the previous conductor of several choirs in Queensland.

Mitch is ably assisted by our talented accompanist, *Simon Walters*, who is himself a music director of a ladies choir and is a professional arranger of some note. He is also a talented vocalist as was seen at our recent Mooroolbark concert.

We have mentors for each vocal section, who look after all new members, to ensure they are introduced to other choristers and are properly equipped with the relevant music scores. They oversee new members for the duration of their probationary period, help with pitch or pronunciation where appropriate and answer any questions new members might have.

There is a break for tea or coffee during rehearsals, which gives everyone the opportunity to mingle.

On the first Wednesday in the month, one of the sections provides the choir and our visitors with a light supper.

Car parking is plentiful and free, while the Ringwood railway station is a 5-minute walk away.

If you contact us via the phone numbers or email addresses shown in this newsletter, we will respond promptly and arrange for your introduction to the choir. Otherwise, just come along on a Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., introduce yourself and you will be made most welcome.

Once you decide to join, we will provide you with access to our web-based member facilities, which will allow you to practice the individual vocal parts at home.

This makes the process of getting up to speed with the Choir's repertoire very much easier.

We also have Welsh language sessions, given by some of the Welsh speaking members of the choir, to help new and existing choristers, in the pronunciation and translation of the words of the beautiful Welsh songs in our repertoire. In addition, our music director occasionally gives a music classes prior to rehearsal for interested choristers to expand their knowledge and understanding of music theory and the essentials of reading music.

Following a few rehearsals and a formal audition, you could be wearing a choir uniform and singing in one of our concerts within weeks and possibly joining us on our next tour.

Would you like to hire the choir?

Anyone who has attended our concerts at major venues such as the Melbourne Recital Centre, Hamer Hall, Melbourne Town Hall, Ulumbarra Theatre Bendigo, or at smaller venues such as our venue for our SOTY Concert (the James Tatoulis Auditorium at MLC), will be aware that the choir has the skills and ability to produce and run high quality major events.

So, if you are an organization or an individual requiring anything from a short rousing opening to a conference or entertainment at a formal dinner (say), to a full two-hour concert, together with quality

guest artists and an orchestra or band (if required), then please call **David Field (0418 175 584)** or any committee member to discuss how we can tailor a performance to meet your unique needs.

The choir is available for community, corporate and sporting events, dinners, anniversaries, weddings etc., at most times in the year.

Bear in mind that we're talking about a choir of 40 to 50 voices plus a professional music director and accompanist (with a portable electric piano, where required).

We have an eclectic repertoire, a wonderful sound and provide great value for money.

Sponsorship opportunities

The choir is a not-for-profit organisation and we rely solely on revenue from concerts, membership fees, sponsorship and donations for our continuing operation.

Our audiences tend to be predominantly middle to older-aged citizens. Hence sponsors with products to market to this demographic e.g., those providing services in retail, hospitality, investment, insurance, real estate, retirement homes etc., might find investing in the choir very worthwhile.

Alternatively, if you have a product or service which you believe might appeal to our audiences, then please contact us and we will be delighted to promote your company, product or service through our concerts and marketing materials.

If you would like to support the choir via a donation, please contact any member of the committee. The choir is a registered charitable body and all donations are acknowledged and are tax deductible.

Newsletter Feedback

Feedback is important to us, so please let us know what you think about the choir, our newsletters, and our recent performances, whether live or on video.

In particular, we welcome your feedback on our recent *YouTube* videos.

We are always seeking to increase our patronage and hence we are happy for you copy or circulate this newsletter to any of your friends and relatives.

If you would like us to add them to our distribution list, so they get their copy by email from the choir, simply let us know their email address.

Alternatively, they can subscribe directly to the newsletter via our website:

www.melbournewelshchoir.com.au or via our Facebook page.

We treat all information provided as confidential and subscribers can opt out at any time.

Email is our preferred way of communication with our friends and supporters, so please send us an email and we'll respond promptly to whatever queries you may have. Alternately, if you want to speak with the newsletter author (Gwyn) about any of the content, feel free to contact him on 0419 562 353.

Laughter is the best medicine

Driving qualification

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

Dad's reply: "Did you also notice that they all walked everywhere they went?"

What a coincidence

Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies.

A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins.

"That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

A nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!"

"That's weird," answers the second man. "I work for the 3M company!"

A nurse tells the third man, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets!"

"That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!"

The last man is groaning and banging his head against the wall.

"What's wrong?" the others ask. "I work for 7 Up!"

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