

Ku-ring-gai Male Choir

President's Report, 2006

(Our 60th Anniversary Year)

What a wonderful year it has been for the choir! In our anniversary year we can be proud to say that we have achieved a number of records. Membership is at its highest, we have presented a record number of concerts, to a record audience. We have had many from our ranks present solo works, and we have had a record number of associate artists work with us. In this very busy year we have also been able to publish the history of the choir and to set up our web site. Although I do not have any hard evidence for this, I expect that we also have a record number of concert pieces in our growing repertoire!

These are just wonderful achievements for the choir.

However, we were saddened to see our long serving associate artist, Wendy Dalton, retire from active service with the choir after 20 years, and we will have more to say about that later tonight.

And we were shocked to lose Roger Nurse, immediate past President, after a lengthy battle with cancer. I have to say, that even when Roger was ill and unable to attend a concert, he always had some notes prepared for me to use on his behalf at concerts. Such was his dedication to the choir. We will miss him very much.

Secretary Terry Barrett has provided some statistics relating to the choir's activities and you may be interested in some of these. We currently have 55 active members, of which 40 on average attend Tuesday night practices. We had 12 concerts in retirement villages and the three special concerts (Anzac at Hornsby, Macquarie University, Eastwood Music Club) with an average 37 choristers present at each one. Audiences totalled over 1900 with an average 100 people per concert. We raised over \$3500 for our three charities (Braille Music Camp, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Royal Flying Doctor Service) and gained some \$1800 in support from Hornsby and Kuringai Councils.

The ongoing business papers for the choir indicate that we are in a healthy state, and actively involved in improving ourselves. To this end we continuing with the audio library, and the web page, and preparing for possible activities such as a country trip (Orange), and the production of a CD.

Happy Feet As a small aside from normal choir business, a small group of 11 members, together with other choirs from around Sydney, participated in a recording session for "Happy Feet" and this raised \$990 for the choir.

Another activity during the year was the training session for the choir led by Alexander Massey. His input to the choir was greatly appreciated.

Associate Artists We had nine associate artists perform with us this anniversary year. These included Wendy Dalton, Warren Fisher, Marlene Vaughan, Vivian Powell, Karen Fisher, Kenneth Plant, Xiaomei Sun, Sherrie Harris and Andrea Catzel. Each of these people enhanced our concert repertoire so much, that it is hard to describe in a few words the impact of their contributions. We wish Wendy all the best for the future, and we look forward to working with a number of associates in the year to come.

Thanks There are so many people who work together to achieve the things we have done over this past year and it is, in a way, unfair to single out individuals. But before I do, I need to express to each and every one of you, my thanks for being a member of Kuringai Male Choir, and for contributing to the strength, the camaraderie, the fellowship and the music that has made the choir what it is today.

But, I would be remiss if I did not select a few for special thanks. On your behalf I would like to thank,

Members who were soloists, or played at concerts – Joe Blansjaar, Gerry Foley, Davis Nam, John Middleton, Peter Burrow, Chris Stevens, Jeff Flower, Daniel Younan, and Bruce Elliott.

Gerrard McMullen who did such a sterling job as Concert Coordinator,

Bill Flynn as manager of the music,

John Penn for his work on the homepage,

Jim Gosbee as treasurer, and

Terrey Barrett as secretary – Terry does just a wonderful job, very much of it behind the scenes in organising the retirement village functions, as well as dealing with the day to day business of the choir. As a support for me throughout the year he could not have done better. He prepares some notes for each concert for me, and before executive meetings and this Christmas dinner he presents briefing notes to use as part of the President's report. Even with this busy schedule he has also been able to put time into drafting and publishing the Choir's history, copies of which you found on your table this evening.

To all those mentioned above, and to any I may have missed, our sincere thanks go out to you all for the time and effort put into the choirs management and function.

Accompanist Grace Edwards-Barnetson, our Grace, she really deserves a medal for her work with us. As I have mentioned at concerts, she not only plays at our performances, but she spends much time with us at practices. And at practices she not only plays for us, but often shares with us some of her extensive knowledge about the voice, its projection and expression and the pronunciation of words. I am sure that the skills she has passed onto us over the years has helped to bring the choir to the high level it is now.

Our deepest thanks go to you, Grace, for your contribution to the Kuringai Male Choir.(Presentation of Gift)

Conductor Then, of course, there is our conductor Dr. Paul Whiting. Paul has brought a wealth of knowledge and musical talent to the choir in his role as conductor since joining in 2000. He has deliberately set high standards for us to reach, and he has provided a challenging musical repertoire for us to sing. In this way he has worked to raise the choir's choral expertise to the level it is today.

To you Paul, we express our heartfelt thanks, and we look forward to another year with you at the helm.(Presentation of Gift)

For me, I have enjoyed my 5 or 6 years with the choir. I have to say that I struggle at times to come to grips with some of the music, and I grizzle and grumble when I don't like a piece, or it is too fast or too slow, or too high, but this is tempered by the warmth of friendship and concern shown by the members, (and the little "kicks in the shin" I get from the other baritones from time to time).

The year as President has been a busy one, and I apologise for missing a few concerts, but John Middleton (President elect) has been quick to step in for me. I am very pleased, and relieved, to say that our new Concert Coordinator for 2007 will be John Middleton, and that the executive is drafting a role for a Publicity/Community liaison person.

Nonetheless, I have enjoyed my time. It has been an honour to serve as President for a choir like ours in its 60th Anniversary Year. (Did we ever sing happy birthday to ourselves?). I thank you all for your friendship and support in 2005 when I was President Elect, and throughout this year as President.

Thank you one and all; a Wonderful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all.

John Gibson
Retiring President
12 December 2006.