

Presidents Report 2011 : Karsten Pedersen

As the year draws to a conclusion it is time to reflect on what I believe has been a very successful one for the choir.

From my perspective it has seen the continuation and consolidation of the gains made in the vocal competence of the choir over the last few years in particular. 2011 has been a very busy one with the choir performing 16 concerts as well as attending our normal rehearsal engagements and four recording sessions for the production of our CD.

The choirs' improved discipline and focus has seen us consistently produce concerts of a quality I believe we can all be justly proud.

This is due in large measure to the energy, enthusiasm and skill of a number of key members of the choir.

First and foremost we acknowledge the time, thought and professionalism generously made available to the choir by Dr Paul Whiting. The work he has put in to the musical direction and conducting of the choir has seen us continue to develop our vocal competencies.

Under his guidance a wide and pleasing array of music is available from which to compile our concerts and we continue to surprise and delight our audiences and sometimes even ourselves. The informative and entertaining way he introduces the music at each concert is much appreciated by audience and choir alike and we say many thanks Paul.

At various times Paul has been ably assisted by Gerry Foley, a musical talent in his own right and also on occasions by Daniel Younan, and we also say thanks for the energy and enthusiasm they show when working with the choir.

Our much loved and respected accompanist Grace Edwards- Barnetson has continued to contribute enormously to the success of the choir whether it be at our rehearsals or at our concerts.

She has shown her versatility, skills and patience in working with Paul and the choir, often under less than ideal circumstances. She never ever grumbles (who said what never ?)..... even when confronted with a poorly tuned piano or heaven forbid, one of those electric keyboard thingy's.

Apart from the choir she puts in much additional time and effort working with our soloists prior to their performances with us. With an amazing understanding of each soloists musical ability and performing style, she makes a very difficult job appear effortless and we acknowledge and thank her for her enormous contribution to the choir.

We also acknowledge some of our soloists who have performed with us during 2011 including Warren Fisher and his wife Karen, Sherrie Harris, Elizabeth Hylton, Salina Bussien, Katherine Sharpham, Katherine Foster, Laura Ashford.

Also at these concerts, some members of our own choir have also stepped forward and contributed their musical talents to the choirs performances and we thank Daniel Younan, Joe Blansjaar, Ken Davis, Richard Deane Butcher, Gerry Foley, John Gibson, Norman Lees, John Middleton and Chris Stevens. I hope I have remembered everyone, if not speak up or forever hold your peace.

I challenge other members of the choir to consider putting themselves forward to do some solo numbers next year as I am quite certain there are a number of very competent and talented singers amongst you. We would welcome the opportunity to hear you perform on your own in front of the choir and it adds depth and variety to our potential soloist pool of talent.

Many thanks to all of our hard working committee members :

Our Secretary – Ian Stapley who carried most of the administrative burden of the choir throughout the year and who has recently confirmed the securing of a grant from Ku-ring-gai Council which will hopefully allow us to acquire an electronic keyboard which meets with Grace's approval.

Concert Co-Ordinator – John Middleton who apart from his work in liaising with the various retirement village contacts also worked tirelessly to secure the talents of other soloists who sing with us. He has also been prepared to step in and back up other committee members in the performance of their duties as required and we acknowledge his hard work in the best interests of the choir.

Librarian – Bruce Elliott and his assistant David Magnussen ; Choir Marshall – Roger Davey ; Web Master – John Penn ; Publicity Officer - Philip Rennie ; Recruitment Officer – Ken Davis ; Treasurer - Jim Gosbee who hasn't been at all well for a good part of this year.

And a special mention to Tom Dixon who has spent many, many hours creating and recording the practice CD's for each of the four parts of the choir – a mighty effort.

I think it is important that all choir members who haven't stepped forward in recent years show their interest and support for the choir by nominating for an executive position next year as the choir would benefit from the fresh ideas and new approach that new committee members bring to our assemblage. So please seriously consider putting your hand up next year.

As mentioned in the earlier part of my speech, this year we have produced a CD of which, for an amateur group of old bastards, we can be justly proud.

Apart from the indispensable musical contribution of Paul and Grace, our CD committee, made up of Ken Davis, Bruce Sharpham, Liam Donnelly, Kim Rennick, John Salmonsens and Ian Stapley, have done a fantastic job and we thank them all very much for their efforts and I am in no doubt that if early reports are any guide that it will be well received and much appreciated by all those who acquire copies.

As it would happen copies are available for sale this evening at \$15.00 each. I for one will be buying a number to give to friends and relatives for Christmas. Many of them have been unable to attend our concerts but are aware of my involvement with the choir and would like to hear some of our music and I feel sure that many of you will know people in the same category.

Our charities this year were ;

- Braille Music Camp for Blind Children
- Prostate Cancer Research
- Research in to Alzheimers Disease

We are yet to complete our last concert for the year but we again will be making a useful donation to these charities this year.

Next year will see the choir's participation in the Male Choirs Association of Australia Concert in Melbourne's Dallas Brooks Hall.

It is on Saturday the 17th of November and will be conducted by the internationally renown conductor Alwyn Humphreys.

I hope as many of you who can make it, will attend and represent the choir to our usual high standard.

Finally in closing I would like to give a special thanks to all the partners of our choir members who provide invaluable support and encouragement to us whatever our vocal abilities and put up with our singing around the house and the time we have to spend attending rehearsals and concerts so thank you ladies in particular and a big hug to you all from the boys.

On behalf of myself and all the executive committee, may I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and festive season and I look forward to seeing you all again in the new year.