



KMC Grapevine No.8



September 2021

Spring is in the Air



Editors' Note Welcome to the



September edition of
Grapevine.

In this edition we finalise with Part 5
of "75 Years of History".

Another great article from Gerry
Foley Part 3 of "Tuning Systems"
Unfortunately, no "Getting to Know
You" article was received this month
The Choir resumes Zoom
Rehearsals for the remainder of the
Covid19 lockdown



Poem for Spring

Spring sings, its gentle breeze.
Butterflies of Glazing wings
Birds cheerfully sing their light-hearted
songs.

As they soar
across the
meadows of
elegant
flowers
Delivering
the
message

that Spring is near.

The flowers danced of such joy.
The silent dance moved the lake. the
water was sparkling.

For the flowers danced gracefully
across it.

Spring sings its gentle song.



Tuning Systems *by Gerry Foley*

Part Three

In this article we'll finally learn how Ab and G# can be treated as different notes, and how string players and



singers manage to produce notes with intervals closer to just intonation than is possible in the equal temperament system used in pianos and various other instruments.

The 55 Division System of tuning

A system of tuning that consistently allows intervals that are close to just intonation divides the octave into 55 equal intervals called "commas" (from the Greek word for "cut") where a comma is 1/9 of a tone. There are no such things as equal semitones in this system: a semitone is either wide or narrow, consisting of either 5 or 4 commas – i.e., either slightly sharp or slightly flat. The rule that applies to semitones is: *if the note letter name changes for the notes forming the semitone it's wide; if the note letter name stays the same, it's narrow.* So wide semitones are found, for example, in C<->Db, D<->Eb, E<->F (!), F#<->G, B<->C; and narrow semitones are found in C<->C#, E<->Eb, G<->G#, A<->Ab etc.

So, whereas in the equal temperament systems all semitones have the same width, in this system there are both wide and narrow semitones. Because of this, each black note can be played two different ways, depending on the situation. For instance, in the key of D, the interval F# to G would be a

wide semitone (the note letter names are different); but in the key of Gb, the interval Gb to G would be a narrow semitone (the note letter names are the same). But on the piano F#/Gb to G is a single semitone interval (there's only the one black note!)

To determine the frequency ratios in this system we have to divide the octave into 55 equal parts by finding a number such that when we multiply the frequency of a commencing note by it 55 times, we end up exactly one octave higher (these parallels setting up equal temperament with 12 equal semitones). This factor must be $\sqrt[55]{2}$, because when multiplied by itself 55 times it gives 2, i.e., $\sqrt[55]{2}^{55} = 2$, which doubles the original frequency and gives a note an octave higher. If we assign a frequency of 1 to C for simplicity, then C to C# will be a narrow semitone of width 4 commas, so we have to multiply 1 by $\sqrt[55]{2}$ four times to find its frequency ratio – i.e., $1 \times \sqrt[55]{2} \times \sqrt[55]{2} \times \sqrt[55]{2} \times \sqrt[55]{2} \approx 1.052$. The next note we want is Db which is a wide interval of 5 commas from C, so we multiply by $\sqrt[55]{2}$ once more, to get 1.065. The next note, D, is a narrow interval from Db, which is 4 commas, so we multiply by $\sqrt[55]{2}$ four more times to get 1.120; and so on, all the way to C an octave above, by which time we've multiplied by $\sqrt[55]{2}$ fifty-five times.

The table shows the approximate frequencies for all the notes in the octave. Notice that Ab and G#, are different notes in this system.

Frequencies of the notes in the 55 Division system

C	C #	D b	D	D #	E b	E	F	F #
1	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
	0	0	1	1	1	2	3	4
	5	6	2	7	9	5	3	0
	2	5	0	8	3	5	6	5

G b	G	G #	A b	A	A #	B b	B	C
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	1.	2
4	5	5	5	6	7	7	8	
2	0	7	9	7	6	8	7	
3	0	4	4	6	3	5	8	

Generally, this system gives intervals that are closer to just intonation than the equal temperament system. For a start, G, the perfect fifth, is exactly the same as the just intonation ratio, $3/2=1.5$. The major third, E, has ratio 1.255, which is closer to the just intonation ratio $5/4=1.25$ than is the equal temperament ratio, 1.26. The minor third Eb, has ratio 1.193, which is closer to the just intonation ratio $6/5=1.2$ than is the equal temperament ratio, 1.189. The 55 Division system will automatically give identical ratios in all keys: e.g. the major third E to G# will be exactly the same ratio as the major third C to E.

So, this is the system that violinists and singers use to get closer to just intonation, and we see why they use wide and narrow semitones – and finally, indeed, we see why Ab and G# are treated as different notes! In fact, there were harpsichords produced in the 17th Century that incorporated this system using *split*

black keys – but for some reason it never caught on.

I recall a conversation I had with Helen Ayres, the very fine violinist in the Seraphim Trio. When I asked her whether she uses wide and narrow semitones in the trio's performances she said she doesn't, because to play in tune with Anna Goldsworthy on the piano the violin and cello have to use equal temperament. However, she went on to say that she also plays with a string quartet based in London and that this group really *do* play with wide and narrow semitones. She said that she finds it quite challenging to play that way and has to concentrate really hard to achieve the effect.

As an endnote, there's a record of some written harmony exercises that Mozart gave to his young Irish friend, the pianist John Field, where he used this very 55 Division system.



**75 Years of History
Part 5 2015 - 2021**

2015

A very important early year commitment for the choir was on ANZAC Day, 2015, when the Choir participated at the Dawn Service at Hornsby, marking the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings in World War One. It was an honour for the choir to join in this community service and to subsequently also sing





at a breakfast held at Hornsby RSL Club.

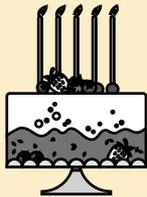
Through this year, A Medley of Songs from the First World War arranged by Alwyn Humphries has again been regularly included in the Choirs concert programs and it continues to be very popular with audiences.

Six concerts were performed at retirement villages which represents a drop of two concerts from the previous year – Huon Park and Wirreanda.

At Buckland Retirement Village at Springwood, the Choir received a very special welcome this



year together with an anniversary cake to mark the 20th



consecutive year that the choir has performed there.



During 2015, donations kindly given by the retirement villages are again being



wholly donated to the charities: The Braille Music Camp for blind children at Mittagong and Streetwork.

On 22 August 2015, the Choir joined with the Orange Male Voice Choir in a charity concert at All Saints Anglican Church, Canowindra in aid of



the Virginia Cullane Cancer Foundation A church service at Orange on the Sunday followed by lunch.

The Choirs annual Concert at Hornsby RSL Club in September was again very successful with Anita Kyle as our sole associate artist. Naomi Giselle, the other associate artist, unfortunately had to withdraw just prior to the concert because of a health issue. The enthusiastic audience was not as large as the record-breaking previous year, but the financial outcome for the concert was still a good one,



The Choir's membership continues to stand at around 50.

In total this year, the Choir have had five members retire or resign but offsetting that has been the induction of five new members.

The Choir also sadly lost Ted Moore, the father of members Tim and Chris. Ted was a former longstanding member and past President of the choir, and the Choir sang at his funeral on 14 August.

Darrell Tuft, a longstanding member who retired at the start of the year, sadly passed away after battling illness and the choir sang at a Thanksgiving Service for him at St. Philip's, Church Hill on 2nd September.

A notable achievement for the choir in 2015 was the production of a new CD entitled 'Ku-Ring-Gai Male Choir Live in Concert.'



In mid-November, Joe and Rasa Blansjaar kindly invited the choir back to their home at Medlow Bath for a barbeque. The weather was a



little damp on the day but that did not detract at all from what was a most enjoyable occasion.



At Christmas time 2015 - 25 members sang carols and some choir items at a Christmas Evangelical Church Service at the Dougherty Centre Chatswood

2016

The 70th 'Anniversary Year' of the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir. In addition to the usual activities and performances a special "70th Anniversary" brochure printed entitled 'Seventy Years of Four- Part Harmony'.



A '70th Anniversary Dinner' at the North Ryde RSL Club

The Choir performed at seven Retirement Villages this year – an increase of one over last year

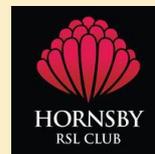
The Choirs accompanist Grace Edwards-Barnetson earned a good rest and travelled to Scotland for a holiday during the year. During Grace's absence the Choir was fortunate enough to have Louise Scott play for them. Louise quickly adapted to the choir's needs and her musical skills were greatly appreciated.



In May the Choir returned to the Aminya Retirement Village at Baulkham Hills after many years of absence and were warmly welcomed back.

St Stephens Anglican Church Willoughby invited the Choir to sing at their Anzac Day Service

In July several Choir members attended a masterclass conducted by American Dr Jerry Blackmore at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church Sydney. Here they worked on two new songs 'When I was young and twenty' and 'Loveliest of trees, the cherry now'. Dr. Blackmore's warming up exercises will be remembered as 'very different' and challenging.



The annual Hornsby RSL concert was a great success with 265 tickets being sold – the best result ever.

In August the Great Western Choir invited the Choir to sing at a joint concert at St Marys.

On the 2nd of September the Choir was invited to sing on the Channel 7 'Morning Show'. This was quite an experience, and it was fascinating to see what goes on behind the scenes at a television studio.



As a result of the 70th Anniversary Charity Concert at the Uniting Church Willoughby in October, a donation of \$1624 was made to 'Streetwork' organization which is one of the two charities the Choir support – the other



being the Braille Music Camp for blind children at Mittagong.

On 23rd October the Choir was invited to sing three songs at the 'Music Clubs of Australia Memorial

Concert' at the Uniting Church Turrumurra.

In October, once again, Rasa and Joe Blansjaar (an ex-member)

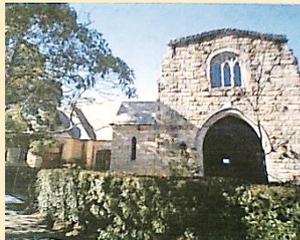


invited the choir to their home in Medlow Bath. It was a beautiful spring day –

the garden was magnificent and the food sumptuous.

The Ryde Eastwood Music Club concert was conducted in November at the North Ryde Community Centre

On the 6th December, instead of having a traditional Christmas Dinner



function, an informal get together



was organised in the St Swithin's church hall Pymble. Several members or groups

performed various musical items or said a poem and a great 'fun' night was had by all. Supper followed

However, the BIG news this year is that on Australia Day, the Choirs esteemed Musical Director Dr. Paul



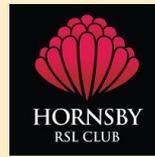
Whiting was awarded the OAM – Medal of Australia in the General Division for service to the community through Choral Music.

2017

The Choir sang at seven Retirement Villages and were again invited to perform at the Anzac Memorial

Service at St. Stephen's Anglican Church Willoughby

In August the annual Concert was



held at the Hornsby RSL: the result was an outstanding success both in attendance and financially.



A lot of work went into the Wollongong MCAA Concert held in October. The Choir learnt a

few new songs and polished up a few from the archives for this event

2018

There were several highlights throughout the year that showcased the wonderful talents of the choir.

The Choir performed at eight retirement villages including Buckland in Springwood. It also contributed to the Anzac celebration at St Stephen's Willoughby.



On Saturday September 22nd the Choir was invited to perform at the 100th anniversary of the first



direct telegraph message to Australia from Wales.

Sunday 28th October the Choirs Annual Concert at Hornsby



“Spring Harmonies” was a great success with the largest audience attending to date.

There have been several significant changes over the past year. The Choirs long-standing accompanist Grace Edwards-Barneson retired. Members expressed their thanks for her outstanding contribution and wished her well.



The Choir was also very pleased to welcome Louise Scott as their new accompanist. Louise has a very distinguished career in music and is an outstanding addition to the choir.

The constitution has been amended to include three new positions: assistant secretary, treasurer and concert coordinator.

2019

The Choir had a most successful year, with a full programme of 11 concerts, comprising 6 retirement villages, one less than 2018 as Lindfield gardens, a valued venue for many years, was unable to accommodate the Choir this year.



Another concert was a most enjoyable event with the Orange Male Choir who were the guests of the Choir in April 2019.

April 2019.



A well-supported fund raiser at the Hornsby RSL,

The Lane Cove Music Club, the Anzac Service at St Stephens Church in Chatswood, A special event concert to support one of the Choir’s charities, Streetwork.



The Choir’s repertoire improves every year. Popular new songs mastered this year include Bird Songs at Eventide, Waiata Poi, The Huntsman’s Chorus, Calon Lan, and Colours of a Mother’s Heart that is a moving tribute to WW1 soldiers introduced to the Choir by the Orange Male Choir.

The Choir are busy rehearsing songs selected for a spectacular event later in 2020 when there will be a Male Choirs Festival in the Sydney Town Hall.



An important project initiated by the Committee recently is to review the Choir’s Constitution so it will up to date and more suited to the Choir’s future. The proposed revised Constitution was approved by the Committee

The year ended with a splendid Christmas Dinner for 70 people at the Hornsby RSL. and the evening was a great success with superb food, decorations, formalities and presentations, and hearty renditions of two bird songs, Birdsongs at Eventide and Sing a Song of Sixpence



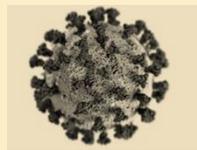
A celebration of 20 years of membership with the Choir this year was also held at the dinner with certificates and special name tags awarded to 4 members of the Choir.

20

Bill Flynn Sandy Potter
Bob Sadler Paul Whiting

2020

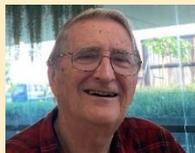
A most difficult year, with a full programme of 12 concerts scheduled for 2020. One concert was performed at the Aminya Retirement Village in Baulkham Hills on 3rd March 2020, all the other concerts programmed had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.



The Choir's repertoire continues to improve. A key to these improvements has been a series of 34 rehearsals conducted on the internet using Zoom technology. This



programme was organised by the Choirs Music Director, Paul



Whiting, ably assisted by Gerry Foley and Stuart Hill. Of special value has been the use of a software package obtained by Stuart showing the music and accompaniment for the songs being rehearsed.



The membership of the Choir is holding up well, with 40 loyal and enthusiastic singers remaining ready to resume.

Especially important has been the programme 15 songs agreed to be sung at a concert in the Sydney



Town Hall, by the Male Choirs Association later this year. This has been deferred from

November 2020 to October in 2021 due to the Pandemic

A major project in 2020 has been to review the Choir's Constitution, an old document that needed updating. After numerous drafts, discussions and suggestions from several members, the proposed revised Constitution was approved by the Committee, and fully endorsed by the Choir's membership. With effect from 1st September 2020, the revised or new Constitution was registered with the Department of Fair Trading. This is now up to date and tailored to guide the Choir for the foreseeable future.

Another project this year has been to update and reorganise the Choir's website. and transferring various documents from the public access area to the Member's only section. Documents transferred include the Choir's new Constitution, and previous annual reports from the Music Director and the President.

The Choir's new newsletter, Grapevine, is also available on the



web site. The introduction of the newsletter, Grapevine, is another initiative commenced in 2020, with monthly editions now being issued by the Editor, Tony Rathbone. This is

proving to be an excellent adjunct to other communications and is helping to keep the Choir's members informed and in touch with each other.

Louise Scott advised the Choir in the middle of 2020 that she would be unable to continue as the Choirs accompanist. Members wished Louise well in her future endeavours.

The Choirs committee have commenced a search for a replacement and hope to have a new appointee in place for the day the Choir resumes face to face rehearsals.



A most enjoyable Christmas Party was held at the Hornsby RSL on 1st December 2020, despite the Covid-19 concerns, with health precautions closely followed.



20 years of membership was celebrated by the awarding of certificates and special name tags to the following members of the Choir,

John Middleton John Gibson
Gerry Foley John Gallo

Due to health precautions the Choir was prohibited from singing this year. However, the superb soprano, Anita Kyle, accompanied by Paul Whiting, sang a bracket of songs, to help celebrate Christmas.



2021

The Choir welcomed the new year hoping this will be a better year than 2020, a most difficult year for all choirs, as the Choir strived to keep connected and engaged to musical activities – despite Covid-19 restrictions.

The first weekly Zoom rehearsal this year took place on 2nd February 2021. Members were encouraged to participate in these rehearsals.



The first Committee Meeting for the year was held on 3rd February 2021. where preparations were made for the Choir's AGM on 9th March

Tuesday, 9th March, the Choir



recommenced face to face rehearsal after a period of 12 months in recess due to the Covid 19 pandemic.



The AGM was completed in the first hour. The second hour was spent singing several songs from the

Red Song Book.

Tuesday 16th March, the Choir welcomed their new accompanist Hank Xiang a well-known concert



pianist, the Choir were extremely fortunate in obtaining his services.

Tuesday 12th April social distancing relaxed.



On Saturday 19th June the Choir held their first concert for the year at the Killara Uniting Church. During the



performance the Choir sang thirteen songs, and these were supplemented by two vocal performances by Anita Kyle and the Choir's accompanist Hank Xiang.

The NSW Premier announced a further Covid19 lockdown, and the remainder of the Choir's concert schedule was cancelled.

The annual concert at the Hornsby RSL Club in October was also cancelled.



The Choir decided to name this concert "The 75th Anniversary

Concert" Another suggesting was to

organise a "rousing" End-of-Year Dinner.

The MCAA Committee decided to cancel the proposed festival on the



weekend of 30th-31st October 2021 with a view to deferring it, yet again, to the weekend of 30th

April - 1st May 2022 at the Sydney Town Hall.

September 30th and the Choir continue to rehearse on Zoom and will continue until



Covid19 restrictions are removed and they can resume face to face

rehearsals once again.

That's all for now folks

Tony Rathbone

Grapevine Editor