

Sounds Organised



March 2016

1/16

Too many pieces of music finish too long after the end
Igor Stravinsky

Time to Remember – a Fitting Tribute

The Camberwell Chorale and Camerata Orchestra under the baton of Douglas Heywood presented a powerful and sensitive performance of "Dona Nobis Pacem" by Vaughan Williams and of the Symphony No 1, "Unsung Heroes", by Michael Easton. Although very different works in many ways, the works delivered the same message of the inhumanity of war.

The Cantata "Dona Nobis Pacem" by Vaughan Williams commenced with the pleading of the soprano soloist, Lauren Oldham and the baritone soloist Ian Cousins, accompanied tenderly by the Camerata Orchestra. In the next section "Beat! Beat! Drums!" the powerful chorus was given extra strength by the strong lower brass, although at times the enthusiasm of the lower brass made it very difficult for the chorus to bring the fortissimo singing to the forefront. The Third movement "Reconciliation" allowed the chorus, soloists and orchestra to express the desolation of war commencing with the beautiful violin solo answered by the mournful oboe. The expressive power of soft singing was particularly apparent in the stunning final section commencing with the solo soprano singing with the full chorus "Word over all, beautiful as the sky". The Camerata orchestra captured the spirit of the dirge with its march-like precision in the opening of "Dirge for Two Veterans". The excitement of "I hear the great drums pounding", expressed by the full choral sound, was supported aptly by the orchestra. All forces demonstrated great control of dynamics, especially leading into the powerful orchestral interlude with a superb lyrical contrast by the chorus commencing with the words "In the eastern sky".

The desolation and coldness of the

text was expressed by the "parlando" singing of Ian Cousins in the final movement. The fortissimo entry of the chorus crying out for peace at the words "Dona, dona nobis pacem" gave a sense of urgency, which was then followed by the pleading of the soprano soloist, Lauren Oldham, singing her top notes effortlessly. The chorus captured the futility of war through its strongly supported and rhythmically precise singing commencing with the words "the summer is ended". Although the chorus experienced some difficulty with a polyphonic section, the unaccompanied singing of the choir at the end of this cantata with the words "Dona nobis pacem" sung unaccompanied and with a beautiful, supported tone, made the work all the more poignant.

This performance was marked by its skilled choir, beautifully rich tone of the soprano soloist, expert baritone, and very supportive orchestra.

The Symphony No 1, "Unsung Heroes" by Michael Easton, was composed to pay tribute to those involved in the war that was meant to end all wars. Dedicated to Douglas Heywood, the Camberwell Chorale and the Caulfield City Choir, in the words of the composer, it was meant to "paint a picture of the Great War and its effect on the community at large". The work, for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus and orchestra, contains settings of a number of poems, including "For the Fallen" by Laurence Binyon (see page 11), the fourth verse of which is which is often recited at Anzac Day ceremonies. The considered, sensitive recitation of the poems before each movement by Heather Sanderson added to the effectiveness of the performance.

This work, with its contrasts, power and poignancy demands future performances. The angular melodies and changing time signatures require much rehearsal and focus for any choir, but the Camberwell Chorale rose to the challenge, presenting a very convincing performance of this work.

The First movement included the poems "On receiving News of the War – Isaac Rosenberg, A Shropshire Lad – A.E. Housman and "In the Ambulance". In this movement the juxtaposition of the mundane "two rows of cabbages" with the words expressing the desolation of war was extremely powerful and conveyed with great sensitivity by the chorus and the orchestra. Musical dialogue between the baritone and soprano soloists also brought out the parlando character of the work.

In the Second movement, "Man's anger at the enemy" the driving tempo conveyed the nervousness and anger. This was most ably supported by the drive of the orchestra.

In the Third movement, Adagietto "To the distant beloved", the orchestra immediately captured the solemnity of the movement. The soloists responded to the tenderness of the text and the sustained strings added to the tenderness of the Adagietto.

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Valerie Margaret KERR

29 July, 1919 – 29 February, 2016

The Camberwell Chorale has had the privilege of having Val Kerr as its member since 1985.

Her enjoyment of the music and the people in the choir gave her much happiness. She sang in the alto part and enjoyed the company of those around her.

It was to be one of her great commitments for the next twenty-five years until she retired from attending rehearsals and performing in 2010. Following this, she attended all performances as a member of the audience and often encouraged others to attend.

She enjoyed every performance and afterwards told everyone how well the choir sang.

Val had been associated with Methodist Ladies' College, Kew, as a student in 1932, later as a teacher and, finally, as a Patron of the Old Collegians' Club and the MLC Friends.

As an English teacher she was very thorough and, when the proof-reading of our concert programs was needed, it



was always Val who found the mistakes with her expert reading of words, punctuation and grammar. Anything that passed her careful scrutiny, deserved its freedom!

Val Kerr completed her long

teaching career at MLC in the position of Chief-of-Staff. Her gentle and thoughtful manner was highly valued, and so it was when she joined Camberwell Chorale in 1985, following her retirement from MLC. Val continued to be a friend and mentor to all, regardless of age or situation. She listened, encouraged and supported all around her.

She loved music and when the Christian Tongan congregation came to her church in Canterbury in 1991, she embraced the change of music style and worship traditions with her usual positive attitude. She loved the people too and, at her final Thanksgiving Service on 7 March, the Tongan people shared their love for their "honorary Tongan". Again, her pastoral care for others and her patience in all things was so evident in her life.

We have said farewell to a good and gentle friend.

At the end of the service, the Tongan Choir sang farewell in their native language. Translated it is, "God be with you till we meet again."

Isobel North

COMMITTEE, 2016-17

President – Di Camilleri
(Ph - 9855 1221)

Secretary – Michael Coughlan
(Ph - 0419 411 225)

Treasurer – Peter FitzRoy
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Non-Committee Positions

Music Director – Douglas Heywood OAM
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Assistant Music Director – Alexandra Cameron
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Newsletter Editor – John Gregory
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Newsletter Assistant – David Dyson
(Ph - 03 6259 5699)

Other members of the Committee are as below. 'Portfolios' are yet to be allocated.

Marieke Van de Graaff
Stuart Hamilton
Rodney Van Cooten
Margaret Keighley
Helen Brown
Isobel North
Bronwen Lane
Jane Houghton
Geoff Best

Maybe one or two others

STOP PRESS

As of the AGM on 22 March, **Di Camilleri is the new President of the Chorale**, replacing Adam Brown, who has been in the position since March 2009. A big welcome to Di (who of course has been an active member of the committee for some years), and many thanks to Adam, whose combination of quiet leadership and financial acumen have both benefited the choir tremendously during his years at the helm. A more detailed appreciation of his Presidency will appear in the next issue. [Ed.]

Reprinted from Sounds Organised, August 2005.

Val Kerr (alto)

How Music has Affected my Life

I was fortunate to have a good start in life, with musical parents who were always encouraging and understanding, especially of an eight-year old not taking kindly to piano practice. My mother had been a piano and singing teacher before her marriage, and I can never remember my family life without music seeming to be part of everything we did.

My mother had a light soprano voice, and whenever she was invited to sing anywhere, mostly gatherings in different homes, she would always accompany herself on the piano. This seemed to me quite normal at the time, but I realize now how capable she must have been. She and my father with his rich bass voice were members of our local Congregational Church choir for over forty years. From the time they were first engaged my parents sang in "Messiah" performances as the soprano and bass soloists in different churches. I joined my parents later and had many happy years, initially singing soprano, before joining the altos. My present Uniting Church has a wonderful Tongan choir and I only sing with them when the anthem is in English.

We began attending MSO concerts in the Melbourne Town Hall in the 1930s. Our seats were in the balcony overlooking the orchestra, as my father felt it would be more interesting for me and my two brothers to be close to the players. In the early days my mother always wore an evening dress complete with long white gloves, which was the custom for concertgoers at that time. I can still hear my father calling out "Bravo" when he had been particularly moved by a certain performance. I still attend MSO concerts, the only change being that I go to the Saturday afternoon series. All told, I have been a subscriber for over seventy years.

When I was a student at MLC in the 1930s there was a wonderful

music director, Ruth Flockart, who was well-known in Melbourne for the quality of the choirs she trained and conducted. I was fortunate to be chosen for her school choir and smaller madrigal group of about twenty singers. I can remember the enjoyment of preparing for the Inter-House Music Contest each year, particularly when I had the pleasure of conducting my House choir in my final year.

As I look back, I can see that it was the sight-reading training that was going to be the most valuable to me in the future. As well as choral items, part of the contest was a sight-reading test where a blackboard was turned round and we were given a short time to look at it before singing the notes in sol-fa. A group of about thirty girls took part in this. Dr Floyd, our adjudicator, would allocate points for the various sections. His summing-up was always entertaining, but with his whimsical sense of humour he enjoyed keeping us in suspense until the last moment. At this time I was still having piano lessons, a subject I took for my Matriculation, and I had also begun learning the cello.

From 1954-56 we had two years in London when my father was one of the two doctors at Australia House examining prospective emigrants. We attended many concerts at the Royal Festival Hall and Royal Albert Hall during that period and we were privileged to see and hear in action such conductors as Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Sir John Barbirolli, as well as hearing Eileen Joyce in an unforgettable performance of Rachmaninoff's No. 2 Piano Concerto, which has always been a favourite of mine. Elsie Morrison, an Australian soprano, was performing leading roles in London at that time and we heard her in "La Boheme" and "The Marriage of Figaro", both at Covent Garden, and also in "Messiah" at the Royal Festival Hall.

My father had been the Victorian Rhodes Scholar in 1913, and he was keen for us to hear the carol singing from the top of Magdalen Tower in Oxford at 6 o'clock on May Morning, a very old tradition that is still kept up every year. This was followed by Morris dancing, punting on the Cherwell and students having breakfast along the banks. An unforgettable experience!

I would also like to mention two other special events I was fortunate enough to attend with friends. Firstly, in 1978, we were in Venice for a concert in San Marco to celebrate the tri-centenary of Vivaldi's birth (1678-1778). Secondly, in 1984, we enjoyed a wonderful recital in the drawing room of Grieg's home, Troldhaugen, near Bergen, where the piano was one which had been played by the composer. It dated from the 1840s, as did the beautifully carved piano stool.

I consider myself greatly blessed to have had the opportunity of singing in the Camberwell Chorale; and this widening of my musical experience has given a real purpose to my retirement. I would like to finish by reminding all my fellow-choristers never to take anything for granted as it is only when you see the end of your singing days approaching that you truly appreciate how rewarding and fulfilling it has all been.

Val Kerr



Ninetieth, 2009

The History of Chris' Wine Cellar

I had long wanted to cellar wine, and had read many articles about what not to do. Don't store wine under the stairs – easy for me we don't have any. Not in the cupboard or the garage. We have cupboards but only a carport. What we do have however is under the house. But access is limited to a doorway of 600 x 550mm; everything (including people – more about that later) must pass through this rather restricted opening. Inside the door, whilst not exactly a Tardis, the space opens up so that at least one can crawl on hands and knees rather than belly – at least those of us with small bellies.

Curiously, the trigger to start this venture was a decision by my Employer to sell off some old furniture. It struck me that one old bookcase could conceivably be converted into a wine rack. I offered \$2 for this rather battered old bit of timber, and was pleased when my (the only) bid was accepted. By careful use of the chain saw I deconstructed the bookcase and recreated my first rack. It had to pass the doorway

in bits and be reassembled under the house. 'no mean feat on one's hands and knees in the dark. It became clear that light on demand would be useful in the cellar. Fortunately the previous owner of our house had the power connected under the house. A power board and a couple of globes shone a welcome light on my future endeavours.

And now to stock the rack! My strategy then was to buy in dozen lots – guided by *The Age Epicure*, James Halliday, et al. The first rack held forty-four bottles. It wasn't long before more racks were needed. I experimented with bits of "2x1" pine screwed together, other assorted bits of timber, and MDF. My final racks (numbers 6, 7 & 8) were made entirely of MDF cut in opposing strips and assembled without screws with reinforcing strips at the back to give rigidity. Of course they had to be reassembled under the house – a task that would have been easier with eight arms – but the job got done. And regardless, all the racks were bespoke – to fit the space.

The first crisis came one very hot summer. Hitherto I had been monitoring the temperature in the cellar with a TempTec max/min temperature probe. This showed that the temperature in the cellar during the winter and spring varied only a few degrees – perhaps 16 to 18°C. Then the heat wave struck Melbourne. At that stage I panicked. By then there were a couple of hundred bottles in the cellar in danger of being cooked. My immediate solution was to go to purchase dry-ice in brick shaped blocks, and simply throw them through the cellar door. It worked to a point, but was an expensive solution, and with the hidden hazard of being asphyxiated trying to recover a bottle to drink. So the solution was – Air Condition the Cellar.

My wife was dead against this course of action stating that it was more important to air condition the house rather than under the house. My response to this was "Frankly my dear, you can get over a couple of hot days – the wine can't"! The wine won. The new cellar had to be separated from the rest of the under-the-house by a series of stud walls which themselves were insulated with pink batts. In the wall closest to the outside wall of the house I installed the small air conditioner – just a plug-in version from one of the appliance stores. The key here was to also install an extraction fan at the outside vent. This took away the warm air from the air-conditioner outlet and blew it outside – stopping the



rest of the under-the-house getting overly warm.

The next problem began as the cellar began to grow. Currently the eight racks I have will store about 650 bottles. At the beginning I would take a couple of the initial dozens for drinking, and store the rest. The cellar grew in nice order with groups of bottles neatly together. I introduced the "Can Ban" system whereby each bottle in the cellar had a label. I would use "labels mail merge" in Word® to print out sticky labels which I then attached to cardboard labels. These labels were hung on the bottle necks with brightly coloured rubber bands. And the labels could be recycled with new information placed over the original sticky label. Simultaneously I logged the wine in on a spreadsheet, including all the details about winemaker, region, vintage, etc., along with some of my own descriptive wine tasting notes such as "hmm like this" or "beautiful, should buy more".

Thus I knew what wine was in the cellar at any particular point in time. As wine was taken out, I collected the labels, and every now and then would update the spreadsheet. As the last of a case was consumed I would archive the details. Major problems began when the rubber bands began to perish. Dear wine cellarer – do not use brightly coloured rubber bands for your labels. One day I saw that nearly all the labels had fallen off like leaves blown by the autumn winds onto the floor of the cellar. Stick to heavy duty brown rubber bands. The penultimate challenge arose

as the turnover and number of bottles in the cellar reached its peak. As one takes a bottle or two out of one of the racks, holes are created. As new cases come in these holes are filled with odd bottles from a case or two. Over a period of years enthalpy (or the increasing state towards chaos) reached its nadir. Theoretically I knew WHAT was in the cellar, but I had no idea WHERE any particular bottle was. This is the challenge I now face. I suspect the answer lies in identifying each separate location (yes all 600 of them as well as other sundry magnums, the odd bottle of Vintage port, and other boxes which don't fit in the racks) and reprinting all the labels with this crucial information. But where to start? Volunteers are welcome to help relay the current bottle description in each location to a new spreadsheet – all 650 of them. But as described previously, only people of meagre girth need apply. We love having friends over to dinner, and I always invite my guests to get down on hands and knees, get into the cellar and choose whatever wine they would like to drink. Only the slim ones avail themselves of the offer.

Finally I would like to comment on James Halliday's excellent Virtual Cellar Concept. This was based very much on my own lines – like most of us cellarmasters, we need to know what we have and when to drink it. But unfortunately not all my wine has yet been reviewed by the master – some may never pass his lips. It would help if one could add such wines to complete the whole picture. I love the Wine Companion and, like James, face the ultimate challenge (on a somewhat smaller but equally important scale) of when to stop collecting and winding it all back to a couple of old timber wine racks. Whatever happens, the journey has been wonderful fun and my children regrettably have been very spoiled to enjoy cellared wine since they enjoyed their first sip.

Chris Murray

P.S. the whole house was air conditioned one month later – thus saving our marriage.





Musical literacy – a skill of some note(s)

Music notation itself has changed from the early modern period to the present day.

Earlier this year a [story ran in the UK press](#) which revealed that it was Heather Mills who taught her daughter music, not her ex-husband, Sir Paul McCartney, because he cannot read music notation. McCartney and John Lennon left the job of notating their music for the Beatles to producer George Martin.



Former member of the Beatles, Paul McCartney, during a 1989 concert in London.

The news was received with frisson in some quarters, suggesting that a central goal of traditional music education, the ability to read music, was, self-evidently, unnecessary for a career, [let alone a qualification](#), in music.

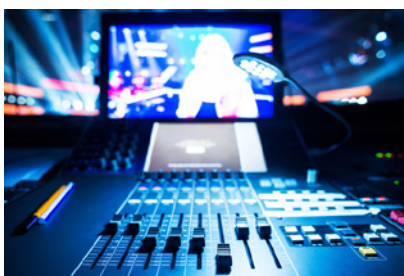
Given the ongoing threat to the funding of such music education in schools it certainly gives us pause for thought.

Should we teach music notation? Should the ability to read music be a prerequisite to take a music degree or, indeed, teach music?

This is much more than simply an academic question. After all, a specialist music teacher represents a significant investment by the state.

More than simply notes on a page?

Musical literacy is indeed no longer a prerequisite skill in many of the degree courses in music emerging at major Western universities. This is particularly true of courses that focus on popular musical genres and music production.



Music production today is largely concerned with technology rather than notation.

This shift reflects not so much the example of McCartney and others. Rather, technological advances in music production have all but obliterated the need for popular music to be transcribed into musical notation for it to be exchanged between producers, performers, and listeners.

Recall that it was not so long ago when the latest commercial musical hits could be bought as sheet music to be played at home on the piano or guitar. Sheet music may still be available today, but in the digital era, neither the creation nor the consumption of music demands mediation through a written score.



Popular sheet music: Wonderful World of Disney (1970).

At the tertiary level, I suspect this emerging lack of confidence in music notation can also be traced to a broader, utopian urge to rid the world of old-fashioned hegemonic norms and institutional values.

The teaching of notation as a cornerstone of music education

can appear to some as merely “just another brick in the wall”, as Pink Floyd would have it; a means of subsuming individual artistic freedom into predetermined patterns of thought.

We thus end up with a rather Orwellian notion educational idea that here, at least, ignorance is strength.

Preordained systems of communication like musical notation are inevitably normative, and thus potentially oppressive to the creative expression of individuals and minorities.

The abolition of such norms has become, according to a [recent essay](#) by the great theorist of postmodernism, Frederick Jameson, “a burning political issue”, often associated with “identity politics and the politics of secessionist groups and marginal or oppressed cultures”.

Preserving music, preserving culture



Symbolum Nicenum from the Mass in B minor (1749) (BWV 232), by Johann Sebastian Bach.

To be sure, musical notation is indeed a reductive system that inevitably shapes and limits what it attempts to describe.

But it still provides the most powerful means yet developed for turning the musical work into something preservable,

transferable, and analysable. It connects us to well over a millennium’s worth of historical music practice. Above all, it allows us to render music into objects of heightened critical contemplation.

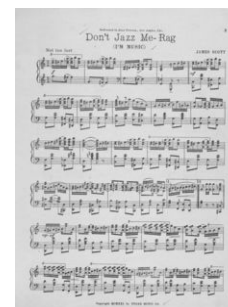
Just as the printed word not only made it possible not just to preserve, but also deconstruct and reflect upon the various ways we construct words to help give meaning to our world, musical notation gave us a similar capacity to reflect deeply on how music does the same.



Robert Schumann's draft for Des Abends from Fantasiestücke (1837), Op. 12, Nr. 1.

Rather than being a utopian moment of artistic (and thus political) freedom, an emerging loss of confidence in notated musical culture might in fact foretell its very opposite: a loss of a particular type of imaginative, historical, and political capacity in our society.

As early as 1938, in the provocatively titled essay “[On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening](#)”, the German philosopher and social critic Theodor Adorno suggested what such a loss might mean in practice. The real dichotomy faced by Western musical culture, he thought, was not between “light” and “serious” music but rather “between music that was market-oriented and music that was not.”



Don't Jazz Me - Rag (1921), by James Scott.

A significant question the music critic must ask, then, is: to what extent is the music offering any resistance to its appropriation as a tool in social and economic domination?

Adorno was deeply distrusting of what he thought was the pseudo folk-culture around popular music. In his analysis, this ethos concealed a commercial imperative that was premised on manipulation and imposition of the populace from above.

So the role of tertiary music institutions in preserving the forms and critical tools of musical culture is crucial. As musicologist Ian Pace wrote recently:

(Tertiary music education should) provide arenas where it is possible to carry out intellectual and creative (and other) work, involving genuinely independent critical and self-critical thinking, in which few things are taken as read, everything is rigorously questioned on a regular basis, with a fair degree of autonomy from commercial or other external function.

Music and late capitalism

What might a world without a critical music culture look and sound like? Some commentators suggest we already know.

For cultural historian Ted Gioia, music criticism is becoming mere “lifestyle reporting”. Or as music critic Jessica Duchan suggests, pop music itself is becoming “watered-down tat with scant musical content, using only a few basic chords.”



Sam Smith won many Grammys in 2015.

A good example might be found in Sam Smith’s [Writing’s on the Wall](#) (2015), the theme song for the latest Bond film. Heightened music production values cannot

rescue incoherent lyrics and an unimaginative melodic and rhythmic design. It should flop, but it hasn’t. We should be asking ourselves, why this is the case?

Surely our capacity to make such evaluative judgements depends in part on an educated musical populace. Music notation is a key tool in being able to turn mere opinion into forensic judgement.

Might an emerging lack of confidence in the educational centrality of music notation really be just another manifestation of the [cultural logic of late capitalism](#)?

Whatever we think, maybe educational debates like these should occasionally be couched at such a level. Questions like these, after all, are what higher education in the arts should be about. Questions about what it means to be rational agents in civil society, and what kinds of investments – educational and economic – we need to make to sustain such a society.



Music Notation has, and continues to be, essential for preserving music.

Oh, and just for the record, Lennon and McCartney may not have read music. But you can be quite sure that pretty much everyone else involved in the transfer of their musical ideas into monuments of world culture did.

Peter Tregear,
Teaching Fellow,
Royal Holloway,
University of London,
The Conversation
November 3, 2015

Two views . . .

Art and Music collide with distinction

Our choir excelled in a unique concert on 18 October at the Hawthorn Arts Centre entitled "It's an Impression". What made it extraordinary was the combination of good music with two visual presentations by our own inimitable historian, Dr John Gregory, who brilliantly exposed us to the connection between art and music of the Impressionist period. Doug Heywood, of course, came up trumps with a lovely range of solo, instrumental and choral music.

According to Wikipedia, "Impressionism in music was a movement among various Western composers, mainly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whose music focuses on suggestion and atmosphere, conveying the moods and emotions aroused by the subject rather than a detailed tone-picture. Musicians were labelled Impressionists by analogy to the Impressionist painters who used colour, light and blurriness to make us focus our attention on the overall impression".

John covered the birth and early life of Impressionist painting with numerous splendid examples of paintings by Monet, Renoir, van Gogh and others, then Ruth Stone on flute, accompanied by Simon Stone, on the piano played three short pieces by French composers of the period (Ganne, Honegger and Mouquet). Next came some music by the choir featuring a variety of leading Impressionist composers (Sibelius, Holst, Elgar and Debussy).

The second half was no less informative for Choir and audience alike. John spoke – with more evocative illustrations – of the global impact, and later evolution, of the Impressionist style. Soprano Lee Abrahmsen, accompanied by Simon, sang two works by Debussy and Ravel, before the Chorale finished the concert in fine style with five pieces by Gabriel Fauré.

This was both an enjoyable and memorable experience, so much so that we are encouraging John to study the connection between psychedelic art and music of the swinging 60s, so we can insist that he and Doug prepare an appropriate concert paralleling modern art and beat music.

Robert Fisher



Art talk leaves a lasting impression . . .

On Sunday 18th October, a captivated audience attended Camberwell Chorale's performance of 'It's an Impression' at the Hawthorn Arts Centre. CC Tenor and Professor of Fine Arts, Dr John Gregory, imparted his knowledge to all with a visual presentation on **Art Impressionism** (form of art using rough brushstrokes of vivid colour on canvas and encompassing artists' ideas and feelings, in particular, of France, Parisian life, nature and people) featuring more than thirty masterpieces from its **birth and early life, c.1860-86** (originating from French artist Monet's *Impression – Sunrise* 1872, and continuing with works from French artists, Morisot, Corot,

Manet, Renoir and Degas) to its **influence and later evolution c.1886-1926** (with works from British-based Whistler, Australian Impressionists, Roberts, Streeton, Condor and McCubbin (from Heidelberg School) and Russell, Dutch painter, van Gogh, and French artists Seurat, Gauguin, Pissarro, and with more paintings from Renoir and Degas before finally finishing with Monet's *Nymphaeas* [*Waterlilies*]).

The Chorale, Soprano soloist, Lee Abrahmsen, flautist, Ruth Stone and pianist Simon Stone stunned all with a repertoire of pieces concentrating on works from numerous composers that captured the essence of Impressionism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through embracing non-traditional scales and tonal structures from its French founder, Debussy, along with other French composers, such as Faure, Ravel, Mouquet and Gaston, Swiss composer, Honegger, English composers, Elgar and Holst and 'Finland's national composer', Sibelius.

Whether art or music enthusiast or novice, there was more than enough to entertain and enlighten all.

Well done John, we look forward to the next chapter on Romanticism later in August!

Priya Mohandoss

For the Fallen

Poem by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), published in The Times newspaper on 21st September 1914.



Robert Laurence Binyon, by artist William Strang.

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Inspiration for "For the Fallen"

Laurence Binyon composed his best known poem while sitting on the cliff-top looking out to sea from the dramatic scenery of the north Cornish coastline. A plaque marks the location at Pentire Point, north of Polzeath. However, there is also a small plaque on the East Cliff north of Portreath, further south on the same north Cornwall coast, which also claims to be the place where the poem was written.

The poem was written in mid-September 1914, a few weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. During these weeks the British Expeditionary Force had suffered casualties following its first encounter with the Imperial German Army at the Battle of Mons on 23rd August, its rearguard action during the retreat from Mons in late August and the Battle

of Le Cateau on 26th August, and its participation with the French Army in holding up the Imperial German Army at the First Battle of the Marne between 5th and 9th September 1914.

Laurence said in 1939 that the four lines of the fourth stanza came to him first. These words of the fourth stanza have become especially familiar and famous, having been adopted by the Royal British Legion as an Exhortation for ceremonies of Remembrance to commemorate fallen Servicemen and women.

Laurence Binyon was too old to enlist in the military forces but he went to work for the Red Cross as a medical orderly in 1916. He lost several close friends and his brother-in-law in the war.

... continued from page 1 – A Tribute

Enormous contrast was achieved in the Fourth Movement, Scherzo 2 ("Battle Scene"), with the fast 3/8 time. The orchestra drew on all its resources to present a powerful climax, supported by the throbbing quavers in the brass. Extreme contrasts were handled expertly by the orchestra and contributed to the feeling of panic and turmoil of a battle scene.

The Intermezzo ("After the Battle"), the Fifth Movement, gave the choir the opportunity to show how it could handle largely unaccompanied sections with excellent diction and a full tone. The fine singing drew the audience to the text they conveyed. The final movement Finale ("A tribute

to the fallen, a warning to the world") again contained enormous contrasts that the choir and orchestra addressed well. The opening string tremolo contrasted to the jubilant singing of the choir at the words "Ev'ry one suddenly burst out singing". At the words "They shall grow not old" the chorus enhanced the poignancy through their full, rich sound, and again the soloists conveyed the pain of the text through their beautiful performance, which continued to the very final note of the orchestra.

It was an honour to be at the performance of this work that demands more performances as a tribute to the countless who have been touched by the inhumanity of war. Although the choir was

somewhat diminished in numbers, it conveyed the intensity, tenderness and power of "Unsung Heroes"; it paid justice to the stunning, varied poems and music.

The silence at the conclusion of the performance demonstrated the powerful impact the performance had on the audience. Douglas Heywood is to be congratulated for his support of the writing of this work and Douglas, along with the choir and orchestra, should be very proud to have presented this performance of such a memorable work.

Ophelia Bryant

Director of Music,
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One Perception of Messiah

I've just had a letter from a friend of mine, Mrs Jones. She got a free ticket for a performance of Handel's Messiah, sung by the Huddersfield Choral Society. Well, she's never heard anything like it before. It's not really her thing. Anyway, this is what she wrote.

Eee well, she wrote, it were fair champion. I wouldn't ha' missed it for all the tea in China. When I got there the Town Hall were crowded.

It was chock full o' folk, and I had a job to get a seat, but no winder – it was all them – singers – they took up half the gallery. There was a chap larkin' about on the organ. He weren't playing nowt in particular, just runnin' his fingers up and down as if he were practising like our George used to do when he started to learn to play the pianner.

Well, after a bit, a lot o' chaps came in carrying fiddles, then they brought in the Messiah. Well, that's what I took it to be. It was the biggest instrument on the platform, and it was covered in a big green bag. Anyroad, they took the bag off it, and then a bloke rubbed its belly with a stick, and you should have heard it groan. It were summit like the last expiring moan of a dying cow.

I was just thinking o' going, when a little chap came on, all dolled up in a white waistcoat and wi' a flower in his buttonhole and everything went dead quiet. You could have heard a pin drop. He had a stick in his hand and he started waving it about and all the singers stared at him. I reckon they were wondering what was the matter with him.

Then they started to sing and they hadn't been going long before they were fratching like cats. I reckon he should ha' walloped one or two of them with that stick. First one side said they were the King o' Glory, then t'other side said they were, and they went at it hammer and tongs. But it fizzled out, so I've no idea which side won.

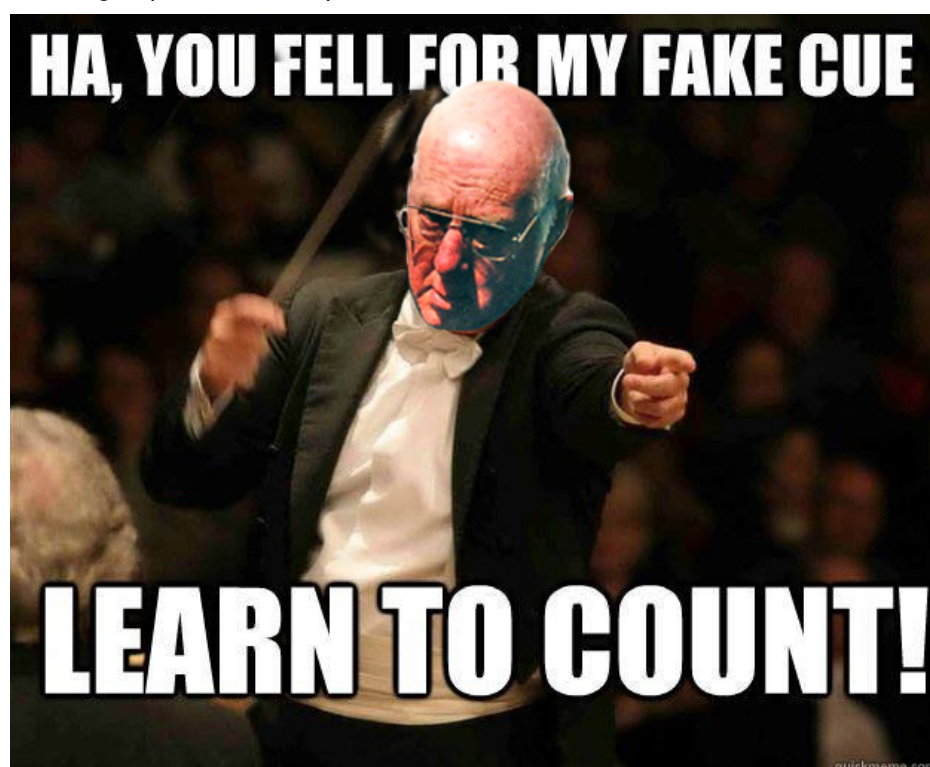
Then there was a bit o' bother about some sheep that was lost. I don't know who they belonged to, but they must have been champion twisters and turners – judging by the words and fancy music. One set of singers must have been very fond o' mutton, 'cos they kept singing "All we like Sheep". I couldn't help saying to a bloke next to me that sheep's alright in moderation, but I like a bit o' underdone beef meself, and he looked daggers at me, and said, "Shhh", so I shushed.

Then a chap stood up and sang by hisself. They must ha' been his sheep, 'cos he said

Let him who is without sin cast the first stone . . .

A little Prayer and Supplication

Almighty and most merciful Conductor,
We have erred and strayed from thy beat like lost sheep;
We have followed too much the intonations and tempi of our own hearts,
We have offended against thy dynamic markings,
We have left unsung those notes which we ought to have sung,
An we have sung those notes which we ought not to have sung,
And there is no support in us.
But thou, O Conductor, have mercy upon us, miserable singers;
Succour the chorally challenge;
Restore thou them that need sectionals; spare thou them that have pencils.
Pardon our mistakes,
And have faith that hereafter we will follow thy directions
And sing in perfect harmony. Amen



every mountain and hill should be laid low. I thought they'd be sure to find 'em if they did that, as well as finding work for the unemployed. Then up jumped another bloke, an' did he look mad. I wondered if they'd taken his sheep to make up for them he'd lost. He said they'd imagined a vain thing. He was in a right state I can tell you.

Then the organist started banging, and the rest o' the band was just as mad 'cos the way they was sawing them fiddles I thought they was goin' to go through 'em. I bet everybody was glad when that bloke sat down.

A lot o' wimmen stood up after that and all of 'em looked as if they were, well, getting on a bit. Some of 'em must ha' bin 64 if they was a day.. They sang "Unto us a Child is Born", and the chaps sang back "Wonderful". I reckon it's a bloomin' miracle.

After that they sobered down a bit and sang about a lass called Joyce Greatly – I've never heard of 'er myself, but the chaps had, 'cos they all looked mighty pleased about it.

Then some bloke got up and said he were the King o' Kings, and another one said he was, and then blow me, they all started arguing about the matter, and they all suddenly shouted, "Hallelujah, it's going to rain for ever and ever".

Well, at that I jumped up and made straight for the door. I'd had me money's worth, and besides I was thinkin' that if it was goin' to rain, for ever and ever, I'd better get home before the flood came.

It was really good although you should ha' come. But, oh, I do hope they find them sheep!