

Sounds Organised



September 2013

2/13

Many musicians are easily excited into joy, and easily depressed into gloom. This comes from their sensitive nature without which they could not be musicians.

Percy Scholes (1877-1958) English music critic

An Epic Saint Paul

Sunday August 11th 2013

Aaargh what an epic! We, the audience, were taken on a thrilling voyage listening to a rare performance of Mendelssohn's Saint Paul Oratorio – performed by the Camberwell Chorale, Camerata Orchestra, soloists, and with Captain Douglas Heywood's experienced hand on the helm. If any unexpected ensemble 'hiccups' arose Doug quickly pulled both orchestra and singers into line with a twitch of the finger and a steely gaze of the (good) eye.

The piece began with a very moving performance of the overture. The Camerata Orchestra built the drama slowly and purposely with controlled deliberation, and the long phrases flowed effortlessly. During this concert it was sometimes hard to believe that these players aren't a fulltime ensemble: they matched tone colours beautifully and I was particularly impressed with the celli and double basses who played as one.

There was some powerful singing from the choir. The fugue of chorus no.5 was excellent, very clear and rhythmic. The choir seemed to really enjoy their dramatic interjections (such as nos. 7 and 8), and sang with clear diction and sharp rhythms. Then there were sublime, magical moments such as the women's chorus of no.14, where the winds and female chorus created an ethereal atmosphere. Choruses, numbers 26 and 35, also stood out as moments of radiance. The male sections of the choir were solid with their determined entries and rhythmic drive, carefully watching Doug. They produced a rich intense sound that greatly added to the drama of this story.

The Chorales in this work offer an opportunity of quiet reflection and a chance for the choir to revel in their simple beauty. My only slight disappointment was that the Chorales of this performance didn't quite achieve the effect of absolute stillness and simplicity – mainly because at times the ensemble in the Chorales was untidy and unbalanced. Perhaps they had trouble hearing each other? We, the audience, had fantastic acoustics; the sound was so amazingly clear and crisp.

The soloists, Emily Uhlrich, Kerrie Bolton, Roy Best and Michael Lampard, were magnificent in their telling of this biblical story. We could hear every word and didn't

need to refer much to the program at all. All four of them had wonderfully expressive phrasing, and seemed to sing in partnership with the orchestra rather than in front of it.

Finally, this performance passed the ultimate litmus test – my fellow reviewer (all of six years) was mesmerized by the entire performance right up until no.42 where he took a nap on the floor. Master Rech wrote of this performance: "The singing was both soft and loud but I liked the loud, fast parts the best". The performers were still going strong in the last few movements, and had me captivated right up to the last chord.

J S-R

Lionel hits Ninety

Our dear friend and former Camberwell Chorale President, Lionel Marks, will celebrate his 90th birthday in August!

Lionel held the top job in the choir from 2001 until 2009, taking over from John Gregory. During his term he showed us his strong hands-on style of leadership. He drove many of the day-to-day activities of the Choir, chaired the Choir Committee, and had a great working relationship with our Music Director, Doug Heywood. He cherished his contacts at the Boroondara Council, at the performance venues, and with local business and the East Malvern RSL. Lionel's great skill was in marketing the Choir's performances throughout the local community, and he was always front-of-house on concert days. One of Lionel's achievements was to



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• BIRTHDAY • AWARDS • BIRTHDAY •

13-8-13 – A Momentous evening for the Chorale



Several significant milestones were marked at the rehearsal on Tuesday August 13th.

An interval adorned with a lavish spread of cakes and other goodies provided by choir members provided a fitting backdrop for the impending 90th birthday of Lionel Marks – former Chorale president and long-time contributor to the choir (see page 1). Lionel reminisced about his many years of association with the Chorale, along with his wife, alto Marjorie, and of their key roles on the committee of the Victorian Concert Choir, also conducted by Doug Heywood (1983-99). Doug led a rousing rendition of "For he's a jolly good fellow", led by Doug, a fitting conclusion to a notable ceremony.

Later, certificates of recognition were awarded to several long-serving choir members by Doug and President Adam Brown. These included three singers whose combined years of service totalled 100: Meredith Buzaglo (40), Sean

Dillon (30) and Chris Murray (30). Speaking on behalf of certificate recipients, Chris Murray reminisced about a number of memorable concerts in which he had sung over the years, including *The Childhood of Christ* by Hector Berlioz (1984). Another performance, a world premiere of the oratorio *At Dawn* (*Cyprus Refugee Camp no.4*) by Stelios Tsiokas (1986), generated a rare outburst from Doug, Chris recalled, as the music was still being written and amended even during the dress rehearsal!

The complete list of awardees was as follows:

10 Years (commenced 2003):

Carmel Barnewall
Annette Meller
Dianne Camilleri
Judy Graham
Margaret Rogers
Peter Hallett
Michael Coughlan

15 Years (commenced 1998):

Helen Granowski

25 Years (commenced 1988):

Marianne Lett
Margaret Hill
Judy Ward

30 Years (commenced 1983):

Sean Dillon
Chris Murray

40 Years (commenced 1973)

Meredith Buzaglo



COMMITTEE, 2013-14

President – Adam Brown
(Ph - 9809 4806)

Vice-President – Di Camilleri
(Ph - 9855 1221)

Music Director – Douglas Heywood
OAM
(Ph - 9391 2086)

Deputy Music Director – Alexandra Cameron
(Ph - 9391 2086)

Secretary – Jane Houghton
(Ph - 9760 5596)

Treasurer – Peter FitzRoy
(Ph - 9827 6806)

Publicity – Di Camilleri
(Ph - 9855 1221)

Membership – Marieke van de Graaff
(Ph - 9872 4077)

Librarians – Dan Linsten
(Ph - 9882 4882) and
Sean Dillon
(Ph - 9894 1898)

Stage Management – Sean Dillon
(Ph - 9894 1898), and
Rodney Van Cooten
(Ph - 9421 0525)

Website – Rodney Van Cooten
(Ph - 9421 0525)

Fund Raising – Margaret Keighley
(Ph - 9561 2531)

Uniforms and Ticket Sales – Helen Brown
(Ph - 9836 9704)

Church Liaison – Isobel North
(Ph - 9808 1668)

Social Secretary – Isobel North
(Ph - 9808 1668)

Venue Bookings/Church Liaison –
Isobel North
(Ph - 9808 1668)

General Duties – Bronwyn Lane
(Ph - 0411 371 744)

Non-Committee Positions

Newsletter Editor – John Gregory
(Ph - 9537 0153)

Newsletter Assistant – David Dyson
(Ph - 03 6259 5699)

Vale

John Fitzgerald Lynch

9th June 1942 – 11th January 2013

We hope you like this photo which shows a very happy John celebrating his Graduation. At his Requiem Mass, one of his sisters commented that she wanted to remember John in his happy moments. He really enjoyed parties, and his other great love was singing. Those of us who knew him will remember his enthusiasm for singing which sometimes carried him away much to the consternation of Doug and the other basses. However, he always accepted any corrections, and cheerfully kept singing. He actually sang with two choirs, and we heard the beautiful singing of the Marion Singers during his Requiem Mass.

His life had been a difficult one. As a baby and small child the family – parents and four siblings, two boys and two girls – were frequently awakened by his screams. The doctor eventually recommended that he be put into care permanently.



His mother and the rest of the family refused to accept this, and he remained at home, continuing to live with his mother until she became too old to care for him. John then moved into his own home despite

family misgivings about how he would cope without his mother's support. They were proved wrong. He managed to continue his work as a librarian at the Department of Transport and to look after his house. As usual, in both these tasks, he was always meticulous and efficient.

He was also a great walker and various choir members would see him walking in areas far from his home near Kew Junction. However he always cheerfully accepted a lift when one was offered. He was also very well read and could enter into deep discussions in a number of areas. He is to be admired for his ability to make the most of his life despite his disabilities. We miss him!

Bernadette Taylor

Reflection

A popular view has it that the world's population is growing so rapidly that the living now outnumber all those who have died since the beginning of human life on earth (200,000 years or so ago). Scientists, however, flatly reject this idea. According to the *Scientific American*, "The Earth may seem crowded with 6.5 billion people but it would take 100 billion living to come close to outnumbering all who have ever lived." (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=fact-or-fiction-living-outnumber-dead>; see also "Is it true that there are more people alive today than dead?": <http://www.guardian.co.uk/notesandqueries/query/0,5753,-26606,00.html>).

Compared with estimates of the span of human life on earth, the history of the Camberwell Chorale, now in its 70th year, may seem paltry. But, in a light-hearted reflection on a serious matter, I wonder whether, along similar lines, the current membership is larger than the number of past members.

In any case, our impending seventieth anniversary has prompted us to think about fellow Camberwell choristers who have passed to the other side. Many of them are still remembered fondly by current members. Below is a list of those whom we can recall. So that we may gather a complete list of those to be commemorated as part of the anniversary, could you, please, advise the editor of names that should be added.

Bruhl-Jensen, Bibi (1937-2002)
Carney, Pat (d.2010) [obit.: N'letter Feb.2010]
Coles, Michael (d.2012) [obit.: N'letter Aug.2012]
Delacey, Bruce (1926-2003) [obit.: N'letter Feb.2003]
Gill, Anne Louise (d.1988) [VCC]
Kipp, Graham
Latham, Max (1925-2009) [obit.: N'letter Feb.2010]
Lynch, John (1942-2013) [obit.: N'letter Aug.2013]
Lynch, Pauline (1944-2009) [obit.: N'letter July 2009]

Marks, Marjorie (d.2011) [obit.: N'letter Aug.2011]
Martin, Helen (d.2007) [obit.: N'letter Dec.2007]
O'Brien, Gwen (d.2011)
Polites, Colin (d.2003) [VCC]
Schildberger, Hermann (1888-1974) (founding Musical Director)
Schildberger, Michael (d.2010) (former President)
Schneider, Marie (d.2012) [obit.: N'letter Aug.2012]
Selby-Smith, Chris (1942-2007)

Requiescant in pace

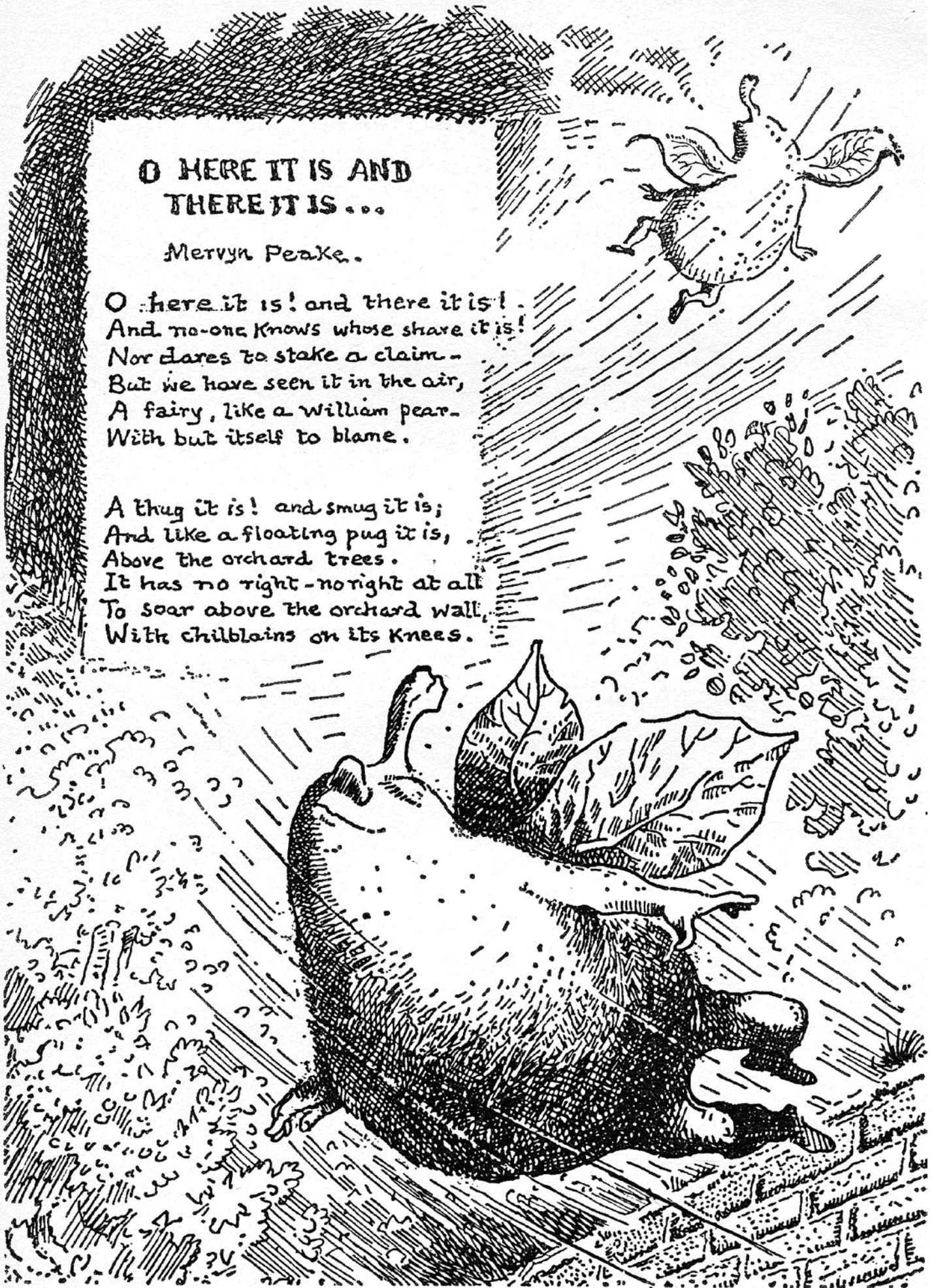
(May they rest in peace)

O HERE IT IS AND THERE IT IS ...

Mervyn Peake.

O here it is! and there it is!
And no-one knows whose share it is!
Nor dares to stake a claim -
But we have seen it in the air,
A fairy, like a William pear -
With but itself to blame.

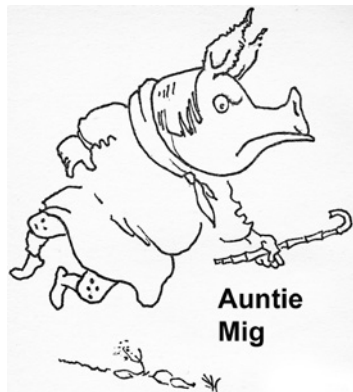
A thug it is! and smug it is;
And like a floating pug it is,
Above the orchard trees.
It has no right - no right at all
To soar above the orchard wall,
With chilblains on its knees.



'Nonsense' a la Mervyn Peake

The Chorale's October concert at Christ Church, South Yarra, will include Richard Rodney Bennett's setting of poems by Mervyn Peake. The author was introduced to Peake's Gormenghast books in his early 20s, and still recalls reading them with great pleasure.

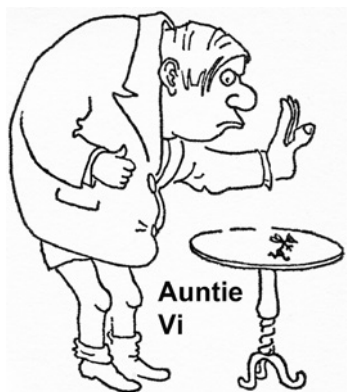
Mervyn Peake was an English artist and writer, best known for his extraordinary Gormenghast trilogy of 'fantasy' novels, begun shortly before the end of World War II.



Peake (1911-68) was born in China, where his father was serving as a medical missionary. When he was eleven, his family returned to England; he went to school in Kent, and then attended the Royal Academy of Art. His career as an artist, and occasional writer and illustrator, was interrupted when he was called up in 1939. Invalided out of the army in 1943 after a nervous breakdown, he was later commissioned as a war artist, and visited Belsen with a group of journalists in 1945 – an experience that profoundly affected him. Following the war, Peake continued writing the Gormenghast books, which were published between 1946 and 1959. The final volume, *Titus Alone*, was issued in unfinished form, arising from the fact that, in the last part

of his life, the author was severely afflicted with Parkinson's disease.

Creatively, he was in the lineage of various English eccentrics, artists and writers, notably Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, a tradition that has continued with Spike Milligan and the Goons, Monty Python, and so on. Peake's widow, Maeve Gilmore, recalls that he was also very well read, counting among his cultural heroes William Blake, Charles Dickens, and many others. In

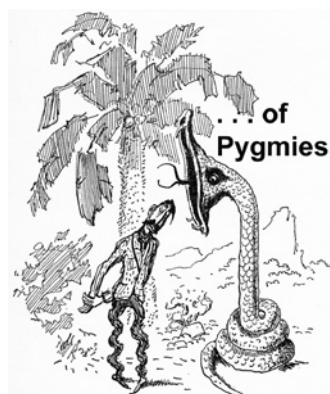


the Gormenghast novels, Peake elevated fantasy and nonsense to a higher plane, creating a remarkably complete imaginative world, centred on the fortunes of Titus 77th, Earl of Groan, in the looming Gothic castle of Gormenghast. These books feature a richly-detailed cast of characters, many of them also visualized in numerous drawings Peake made, apparently with a view to a possible opera based on the novels (many of these sketches are included in a recently issued illustrated edition of the trilogy). In both words and pictures, Peake summoned up brilliant portraits of Titus, his sister Fuschia, and a fantastic array of supporting characters, many with appropriately Dickensian names, including Steerpike, Muzzlehatch, Swelter (the huge castle chef), Prunesquallor and Flay.

Richard Rodney Bennett's 'Nonsense' (1979; revised 1984) is a setting of seven poems from Peake's posthumously-published *A Book of Nonsense* (1972), a collection of his playful rhymes and other lighter writings, embellished with a number of his own comic illustrations. A taste for the absurd and whimsy is apparent throughout, together with some grotesque dimensions of the Gormenghast kind, as in the unnerving conclusion to 'The Men in Bowler Hats are Sweet', where vampires make an unexpected entrance. The darkest example is 'The Dwarf of Battersea' – the opening poem in the book, and the closing piece in Bennett's work. Widow, Maeve, (in her introduction to *A Book of Nonsense*) recalls that he gave this bizarre long poem to her in 1937, as an eccentric sort of wedding present. Peake was working at the time in a studio in a former barber's shop at no. 133 Battersea Church Road, London – which explains some of the details.



A Book of Nonsense did not include any illustrations for 'The Dwarf of Battersea,' but it did contain drawings for several other poems set by Bennett, notably a group relating to 'Aunts and Uncles'. Maeve Gilmore says that this poem was written in the late 40s, after a dinner party conversation about the notion of 'propinquity' – the way people often seem to end up resembling their pets or partners. The sketches perfectly catch the spirit of Peake's punning poem, with poor Auntie Jill the Pill petulantly staring down a well-wisher from inside a glass jar, and Uncle Jake promenading, blissfully unaware that he has turned into a snake.



A Celebration of Music for Choir, Orchestra, Organ and Brass

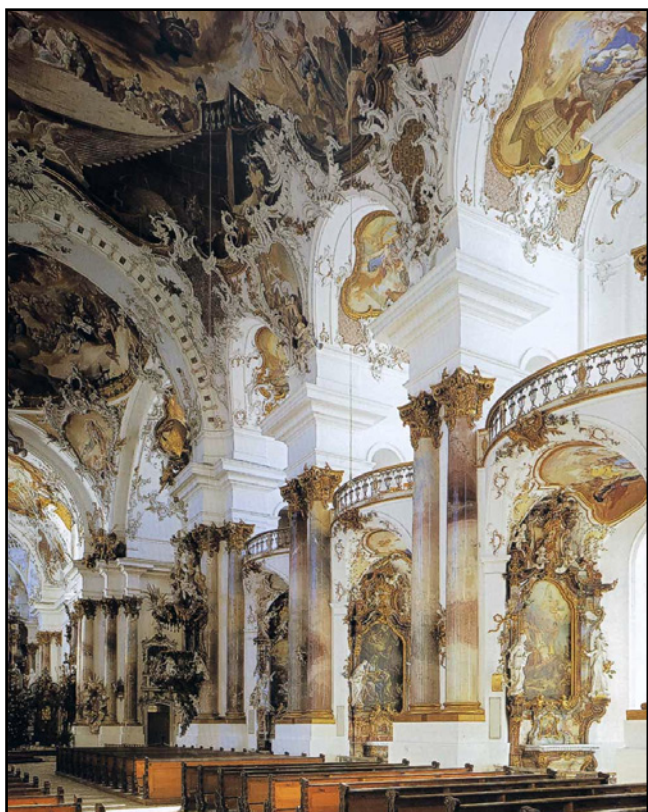
Sunday 5th May, 2013

I took great pleasure in attending the above concert at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton. Both parts of the programme included eminent but seldom performed composers. That added greatly to its anticipation.

The first half of the performance focused almost entirely on organ pieces played by Thomas Heywood; a celebration of his return to Australia from the UK. Heywood moved through the triumphant Gigout, romantic Elgar, light stepping Handel to conclude with a rather bombastic piece by Whitney. Each was played with passionate proficiency fully realizing the extensive vocabulary of the instrument. The pieces were also informatively introduced, enhancing the audience's participation.

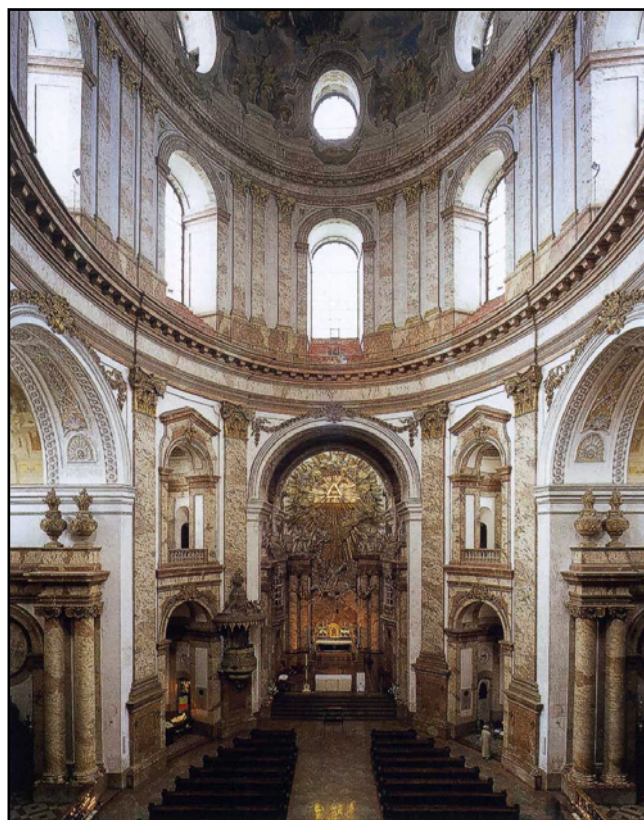
The second half of the concert, Franz Schubert's Mass No.6 in E_b Major was exquisite. The choir, soloists and orchestra performed in unison, each supporting the other to create harmonious excellence. I specifically enjoyed the integration of the soloists as opposed to the often 'stand alone' highlighting, which added to the very powerful cohesion of the piece.

Schubert's music is highly analogous with the architecture of its time and location specifically the work of two artist/architects with the same name, Fischer (not related), who I have selected to illustrate a point – the only concern I had with the performance. The interior of Johann Michael Fischer's Benedictine Church of Zwiefalten is a visualization of Schubert's balance between delicate voices blending with the richness of the wind instruments.



Johann Michael Fischer, Interior of
Benedictine Church of Zwiefalten, 1738-65

However, the West front and interior of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach's Karlskirche in Vienna, is more in keeping with the dramatic, almost operatic parts of the Mass.



Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, West front
and interior of Karlskirche, Vienna, begun 1715

Schubert's Mass is a highly theatrical and complex piece of music and, as with all meaningful prayers, is equally human and religious; it moves between delicate harmony to ethereal drama. If it were performed in the above spaces the nuances of the piece would not only be a reflection of the architecture but the architecture, with its multiple surfaces, alcoves and textures would have enhanced all of the tonal intricacies.

St Andrew's Church, with its brick and tile interior cannot replicate the same acoustic brilliance of the above buildings although the performance of the choir, orchestra and soloists came very close to doing so. There were times, however, when parts of the complexity were being lost and this was due mainly to physical placement. The tenor section, which is pivotal throughout the mass, were physically disadvantaged by being on the same level as the back row of the orchestra, and were therefore sometimes subsumed. Perhaps they could have been amplified, as were the soloists, or even raised above the orchestra in tier formation for improved projection towards the back of the church.

Having said that however, the concert was joyous. It was very professionally presented and performed and I look forward to hearing Mendelssohn in August.

Dr Jen Butler,
Coordinator/lecturer Interdisciplinary Design,
Monash University

Mendelssohn – a Musical Marvel

The Chorale has performed Mendelssohn's late masterpiece, Elijah, a number of times in the past, but most of us are less familiar with his St Paul, completed ten years earlier, and a highly popular work during Mendelssohn's own lifetime. Alto Priya Mohandoss discusses St Paul here. For a review of the Chorale's performance on 11 August, see page 1 (Ed.)



Felix Mendelssohn was born on 3rd February, 1809, in Hamburg, Germany.

In 1816, his parents declared him a protestant instead of a Jew, and affixed the Christian surname Bartholdy. As a result, he always signed himself as 'Felix M.B.' or 'Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy'.

Even though some of his compositions were criticised at the time, it is clear that Mendelssohn's oratorio, *St. Paul*, commissioned in 1832, was acclaimed as the most

prominent of all his works to that date. It was completed after the death of his father, Abraham, being dedicated to his memory.

In 1836, *St. Paul* was premiered at the Lower Rhein Music Festival in Düsseldorf, Germany. The work was such a success that additional performances were held throughout England, Denmark, Holland, Poland, Russia, Switzerland and the United States of America.

Although he excelled in music from a young age, Mendelssohn's parents were unhappy that he had chosen this pathway as his career. However towards the end of 1841, he was heralded as Germany's most revered living musician. Although he was primarily a composer, he was also known as a conductor and pianist.

In 1847, he conducted *St. Paul* for the last time in Leipzig, Germany. Seven months later, a mild stroke led to his death. His body was taken from Leipzig to Trinity



Michelangelo's Conversion of St Paul (Vatican, c.1542-45)

Cemetery, Berlin, and was laid to rest close to his sister's grave.

A statue of Mendelssohn was erected shortly after. However in 1937, during the rule of the Nazis in Germany, the statue was removed and sold as scrap metal.

Since the end of World War II, there has been a resurgence of his music with some works being brought to the public for the first time. Today, he is still renowned for his life as a musician and scholar.

PM

... continued from page 1 – Lionel hits Ninety

was to steer the Chorale through a very successful 60th Anniversary year in 2004.

His association with the Camberwell Chorale began in 1974, a few years after Lionel and Marjorie married. By his own admission, he is not blessed with a singing voice, nor does he have a great knowledge of choral music. But, he has learned a great deal, and made many warm friendships over the years.

As a retired Commonwealth Savings Bank executive, Lionel was well positioned to take over as Treasurer of the Victorian Concert Choir in its early years. He remained in that position until the winding up of the Victorian Concert Choir in the late 90s. Thereafter, Lionel acted as Honorary Auditor for the Camberwell Chorale.

Lionel retired from all positions

in 2009, having given twenty-five years of energetic and active service to the Camberwell Chorale (and VCC). His legacy was a financially sound organisation, a talented committee, and a strong and happy membership. Lionel felt privileged to be able to make a contribution as 'CC' President to a fellowship that gives so many people so much pleasure, be they audiences, singers or members of the Camerata Orchestra.

In recognition of their enthusiastic contribution to both organisations, Marjorie and Lionel were made Life Members of the Victorian Concert Choir and the Camberwell Chorale in 1994.

While we rarely see Lionel's face around the Camberwell Baptist Church these days, he remains an enthusiastic patron at all performances. Between concerts

Lionel busies himself with household duties, family visits, watching Old Scotch play footy, lawn bowls and the Lodge. But his passion is watching sport, be it horse-racing, football, cricket, tennis, golf, etc – day and night! If you did not already know, Lionel is a life-long Swan's supporter and can boast attending their 1933 Premiership win (then as South Melbourne). The lakeside oval was a second home for Lionel when he was a boy and his passion transferred to their reincarnation in Sydney. For Lionel, we hope the Swans can make it a sixth Grand Final win this year . . . it would certainly be the best 90th birthday present he could hope for.

Congratulations Lionel, we raise a glass to you.

MH

SINESS • MEN'S SECRET BUSINESS • MEN

Sunday 21 July 2013 saw the inaugural meeting of the Camberwell Chorale Men's Group – not (as it may seem) a subversive splinter group, but an officially-sanctioned initiative of the inventive CC Social Committee. The idea was to provide some sort of equivalent to the Blue Illusion events organized for female members of the choir, although not necessarily with the same mystique or fund-raising power. Indeed, the group which assembled at Bob Adams' Brighton house managed to spend the afternoon without generating *any* financial benefit for the choir. But the bonding was palpable and profound, as the attached photographs clearly show.

And there was a potentially lucrative outcome at least, since, after two and a half hours of singing and carousing, the group came to the spontaneous decision that they should perform – both together and in smaller groups – at the CC Christmas party in December. Thus nine people are already guaranteed to attend the dinner, and probably many more, if you factor in adoring partners, fans etc. The repertoire is under construction, but may include *On the Road to Mandalay* and other Peter Dawson songs, as well as other appropriate or inappropriate items (depending on your point of view). Further meetings will follow – and of course others are very welcome, both CC members, and other interested men of good character or with a decent wine-cellar (or both?).

For the record, those present were Bob Adams, John Gregory, Chris Murray and Joe Sullivan (tenors); and Geoff Best, Colin Burrows, Michael Coughlan, Bruce McLaren and Lawrence O'Bryan (basses).

Lawrence had to leave slightly early and hence does not figure in the photos. Many thanks to Bob and Wendy for their hospitality (Wendy very sensibly disappeared for most of the afternoon!).

Security, confidentiality, and intelligence issues prevent further reports from this group.

JG

