

From its humble birth around a piano in a Melbourne suburb in 1984, the Melbourne Welsh Male Choir quickly established itself as a leading male choir in Australia, and became known for its "special" sound and the boldness and ambition of its concert productions. Within two years of its birth the choir had taken a leading role in helping to produce critically acclaimed concerts at the Melbourne Town Hall and the Hamer Hall and perhaps most ambitiously at the Sydney Opera House in 1989.

In pursuit of excellence the choir appointed its first professional Musical Director, Phillip Smith in 1995 and its first professional Accompanist Linda O'Brien in 1996. This winning formula resulted in a marked improvement in the choir's abilities. Douglas Heywood OAM joined the choir as Musical Director in 2001 and continued the improvement and enhanced performance by adding a full symphony orchestra to productions. The Melbourne Welsh Male Choir then produced ambitious concerts at the Hamer Hall employing guest artists - such luminaries as Aled Jones, Judith Durham, Rhonda Burchmore, Peter Brockelhurst, Sally Anne Russell and Rhys Meirion.

The choir is steeped in the Welsh Choral tradition but still is proudly Australian and has members from diverse nationalities. Beginning with its founding musical director Bill Mead, the choir has nurtured its contacts in Wales and has the honour of having as patron and occasional conductor Alwyn Humphries MBE. As a result the choir has accompanied Bryn Terfel and also Aled Jones in concerts in Melbourne and enjoys a well deserved reputation in the "Land of Song".

The Melbourne Welsh Male Choir has been engaged for many prestigious events including joining survivors of the Glen Miller Orchestra and The Seekers at the 50th anniversary of the Royal Melbourne Hospital at the Hamer Hall; the 75th Anniversary of the RAAF at the Tennis Centre; the 150th Anniversary of the Eureka Stockade in Ballarat; the opening of the Commonwealth of Nations Law Conference at the Melbourne Convention Centre; and the reopening of the Domed Reading Room at the State Library.

The choir fosters young talent through its annual *Singer of the Year* competition for singers under 35 years, with many of the winners and finalists currently performing on the world stage. We are active in charity concerts, including assisting to raise in excess of \$200,000 for Palliative Care over the past 15 years, and contributing more than \$12,000 from our 2009 St David's Day Concert to the Victorian Bush Fire Appeal.

Overseas performances include Cardiff Arms Park in Wales in 1992; Atlanta, Georgia in 1994; concert tours of South Africa in 1997, Canada 2002 and Wales including London's Royal Albert Hall in 2008. The choir also regularly performs in regional centres within Australia including Tasmania.

The Choir is proudly independent, receiving no government subsidies and can only continue to prosper through the excellence of performances and recordings and the support of our audiences. We have an inspiring, professional musical team in Lucas de Jong and Linda O'Brien and under their influence the choir looks forward to a rewarding future.

25TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL NIGHT OF SONG

Saturday 5th September 2009

Compere: Ray Kitto

Mangoane Mpulele Sotho folk song arr. Philip McLachlan
Cello - Imogen Manins
Somagwaza Xhosa/Bantu Soloists Lucas de Jong and Murray George
Cole Porter Medley arr. Alan Simmons

Singer of the Year Finalists

Jocelyn Hickey *Soprano* Ah! Je ris de me vois Gounod
Samuel Dundas *Bass* Riez, allez, Riez from *Don Quichotte* Massenet
Emily Ulrich *Soprano* Caro nome from *Rigoletto* Verdi

Give Me That Old Time Religion arr. Alan Simmons
Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet J Raymond Williams
I'm Gonna Walk arr. Alwyn Humphreys Imogen Manins
I'se Weary Of Waitin' Duncan Young arr. Doris Arnold Solo Lucas de Jong

Imogen Manins - cello solo

The Swan from *Carnival of the Animals* Saint Saëns
Suo Gan traditional Welsh lullaby

Ysbryd y Nos Harpwood/Elis
You Raise Me Up Graham/Loveland arr. Roger Emerson Imogen Manins

INTERVAL

Tydi a Roddaist Rowland Hughes/Arwel Hughes
Ar Hyd y Nos arr. Harry Evans Imogen Manins
Gershwin Showcase arr. Carl Strommen Imogen Manins

Singer of the Year Finalists

Emily Uhrich *Soprano* Art is calling for me from *The Enchantress* Herbert
Samuel Dundas *Bass* Lonely Room from *Oklahoma* Rodgers & Hammerstein
Jocelyn Hickey *Soprano* The sun whose rays from *The Mikado* Gilbert & Sullivan

He Ain't Heavy Russell/Scott/Althouse arr. D Heywood
Hine e Hine Te Rangi Pai arr. Alwyn Humphreys Imogen Manins
She Was Beautiful *Cavatina from the Deer Hunter* Imogen Manins

Singer of the Year Honourable Mentions

Angela Hogan *Soprano* Je dis que rien from *Carmen* Bizet
Michael Lapina *Tenor* Nessun Dorma from *Turandot* Puccini

Presentation of Singer of the Year

World In Union (audience participation) Holst/Skarbek arr. M D Williams

Anthems

The World In Union

There's a dream I feel, so rare, so real, All the world in union, the world as one
Gathered all together, one mind, one heart Ev'ry creed, ev'ry colour once joined never apart
Searching for, what's best in all Helping others when they fall
We can try to the end, making foes into our friends
Its the world in union, the world as one As we climb to reach our destiny a new age has begun
We face high mountains, must cross rough seas We must take our place in history and live in dignity
Just to be the best we can sets the goal for ev'ry man When we follow that call its a victory for all
Its the world in union, the world as one As we climb to reach our destiny a new age has begun (repeat twice)



Imogen Manins is an uncommonly gifted cellist, whose classical background with a Masters degree at the VCA (University of Melbourne) and a wonderfully creative and innovative musical mind has led to performance now primarily in improvisational music. Imogen has collaborated with many of Australia's most outstanding improvisers, leading to an exploration of new musical ground for cello. She plays in a number of improvisational ensembles including those with Tony Gould (piano), David

Jones (percussion), Gianni Marinucci (trumpet/flugel), Tony Floyd (drums), Nick Haywood (bass), David Griffiths (clarinet) and Stella Skinner (guitar). She has performed at Australia's international jazz festival at Wangaratta, and at Melbourne's Stonnington Jazz Festival. In 2008 she gave a concert with outstanding Finnish musicians Verner Pohjola - trumpet and Olavi Louhivuori (drums) and was guest artist for a new ABC Classics recording project featuring renowned French horn player Barry Tuckwell, the Tony Gould Trio, and the strings of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Graeme Lyall.



Roxane Hislop - Adjudicator

On graduating from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts, Roxane Hislop received a scholarship to attend the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music Opera School. She went on to win the prestigious Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship, the Inaugural AIMS Scholarship, the Dame Mabel Brooks Scholarship and the Sydney Sun Aria Award. Roxane also represented Australia at the National finals of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in New York, and was awarded the Victorian Green Room Award for best female artist in a supporting role for her performances as Maddalena in Rigoletto and Olga in Eugene Onegin. Roxane has appeared with every major opera company in Australia and in concert with all the state symphony orchestras. She also teaches voice at Melbourne and Monash universities. Roxane's 2009 engagements include appearances with Victorian Opera as Geertje Dirx in Rembrandt's Wife, Dryad in Ariadne auf Naxos, Amastre in Xerxes; Flora in La Traviata and Maddalena in Rigoletto for Opera Queensland, Beethoven Symphony no. 9 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and performances at Opera in the Alps and Opera by the Lock.

Janet Perkins - Accompanist

Janet studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium with Roy Shepherd. She specialises in vocal accompaniment, and is in great demand for most of the competitions in Melbourne and Regional Victoria, including South Street, and tertiary voice exams at the end of the year. She has played for choirs all her life, and frequently gives recitals with established artists.



Lucas de Jong is a highly accomplished professional musician with more than 20 years Australian and international experience as a principal operatic baritone and classical voice teacher.

During his distinguished career, he has performed with some of the world's leading opera companies, including Royal Opera House

Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English National Opera and Welsh National Opera. He has also performed in Australia with Opera Australia, Victoria State Opera, Opera Queensland and West Australian Opera.

In the course of his career Lucas has gained extensive knowledge and experience of performance and singing technique which he is able to bring to the choir with his own unique style.

He is currently a classical voice teacher and conductor for the School of Music at Monash University, and The Australian Catholic University.

For several years Lucas has performed roles for Melbourne Opera. He enthusiastically supports the development of young singers.

We are delighted with his vision and enthusiasm and are looking forward to a fruitful and rewarding relationship that will last for years to come.



Linda O'Brien has been the choir's accompanist since 1996, and in that time has impressed all who hear her, as a soloist as well as accompanist. She brings a freshness to the choir's musical accompaniment, which lifts the choir and audiences alike. Linda also accompanies the Australian Girls' Choir, and is the pianist for the Australian Pops Orchestra.

For many years Linda and her piano/violin/doublebass trio held a residency in the Grand Dining Room of Melbourne's Windsor Hotel. Singers she has accompanied include Marina Prior, David Hobson, Judith Durham, Sall-Anne Russell, Donald Cant, Philip Gould and Karen Knowles. She also enjoys frocking up to perform jazz, blues and cabaret in Kelly Auty's "Wild Women Show"!

Linda is the Official Accompanist for Royal South Street, Waverley, Diamond Valley, Mordialloc, Ararat and Boroondarah Eisteddfods. She has released two solo piano CDs - *Kitten on the Keys* (2002) and *Dizzy Fingers* (2007).

In addition, Linda gives private piano tuition, is in demand as a VCE and AMEB exam accompanist, and mentors and teaches song-writing skills to disadvantaged teenage girls ("Noisy Girls" project).

The Choir wishes to thank and acknowledge the following generous sponsorship of this year's Singer of the Year competition

The Opus 50 Charitable Trust
The Robert Salzer Foundation
Air Conditioning Engineering Services P/L

