



December 2023

The Choral Grapevine website: <https://thechoralgrapevine.wordpress.com/>

Inside...

A newsletter for all choristers in Western Vic. &

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Editorial

December 1st used to mark the start of secular Christmas festivities. However, even before Melbourne Cup Day this year, Christmas music was playing on a maddening loop in shopping centres, which are already full of frenzied shoppers worrying that they might not be ready for that one big day. Under the guise of ‘Black Friday’ and ‘Cyber Monday’, we were urged to spend our dollars online with ‘never to be repeated’ offers.

December marks the start of a busy time for most choirs – in high demand for local events, and with their Christmas concerts in final preparation. Christmas in summer means most communities have Carols by Candlelight events. I wonder if you’re involved. Living in southern Victoria one needs to be ready for any weather – will it be coats or t-shirts, raincoats or sunscreen. I’ve certainly experienced pretty much the lot over the years. I remember one particular year in Johnstone Park in Geelong, with fingers almost too frozen to pluck the guitar strings and the wind constantly extinguishing flickering candles.

I look forward to at least four local choir concerts coming up – and would love to get around our region to sample what your choir is doing. Our weekends are crowded with concerts and carol services.

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I congratulate *Tides of Welcome* which has just celebrated its 20th anniversary at a special concert at the Queenscliff Music Festival. All but one of the past and musical directors were in attendance along with Wayne Jury the current director.

I wish you all well at this frenetic time of the year. Enjoy your summer break and come back refreshed for a happy year of music with friends in 2024. Enjoy your singing, *Helen*

Reports from our Choirs

HAMILTON SINGERS

Our Christmas Concert for Hamilton Singers is actually on the afternoon of December 3rd at 3pm at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church here in Hamilton. Tickets are \$15 and afternoon tea is also supplied. This Christmas concert will feature the Singers as well as a few guest artists, instrumentalists from our local area. Many carols will be sung and enjoyed. I suspect that these details may have already happened by the time you get out your next edition because our concert is very early this year as our accompanist is going away.

Beth Tonissen

MILLICENT CHORAL SOCIETY

The Christmas season is coming at us at a fast rate. The Millicent Choral Society will present the traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church Millicent on Sunday 10th December at 3.00 pm.

This Christmas celebration is a service of readings and carols, made famous by the Choir of Kings College Cambridge, through its Christmas Eve broadcasts.

The Kings College service was first broadcast in 1928 and, with the exception of 1930, it has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World War. Today, it is estimated that there are millions of listeners and viewers of the annual Festival of Nine lessons and Carols from Kings College Chapel worldwide.

The Nine lessons and Carols format had its beginnings in the early 1900's and its popularity spread such that it is now performed around the world.

The Carols performed by the Choral Society in this presentation will range from the traditional to present day compositions, and the service will include time-honoured carols for congregational singing.

The offering at this Service will support the Combined Churches Christmas Hamper Appeal.

Michael Bleby

CORYULE CHORUS

Our Senior's Festival concert in October was a sellout. Once again we welcomed local aged-care residents who arrived in mini buses to enjoy the performance as well as a delicious afternoon tea.

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Our next event is a Christmas sing with children from Clairvaux Primary School in Belmont on 30 November. **Coryule Chorus** and **Clairvaux Primary School Choir** will perform a number of Christmas songs individually as well sing together as a combined choir.

Our final event for 2023 will be an Open Rehearsal on 7 December where folk can drop in and see what the choir gets up to during a rehearsal. We plan to introduce a simple, completely new piece of music on the day so that the audience can see how a new piece is learnt from the start.

Joan Kelly, Publicity, Coryule Chorus Website: <https://www.coryulechorus.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083597670948>

THE GISBORNE SINGERS

The Gisborne Singers had a successful concert on October 29th, 2023. The program included Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, *Homeward Bound* and *Shenandoah* (both arranged by Mack Wilberg), all accompanied by piano four hand. Elyane Laussade and Anna Clarke-Zuidland were the pianists and they also played Schubert's *Fantasy in F minor*. Anna, our choir's accompanist, was a former student of Elyane's and they combined superbly. The venue was the very lovely Church of the Resurrection, built after the Ash Wednesday fires and housing a full length stunning stained-glass window by Leonard French, of NGV Great Hall ceiling fame.

The choir will have performed *Christmas with The Gisborne Singers* on December 2nd, when this newsletter comes out. The program included popular carols (with sing along opportunities for the audience) and some traditional but lesser-known carols. Yet another beautiful church was the venue, this time the historic bluestone Our Lady of the Rosary in Kyneton.

After our annual Christmas Party (the best party of the lot!), we will take a well-earned break until 2024. The new year plans start with *A Classical Celebration* on Sunday April 28th at Our Lady of the Rosary, Kyneton, and Sunday May 5th at St Mary's Anglican Church in Sunbury. The program includes:

HANDEL *Zadok the Priest* HWV 258, MOZART *Exsultate, jubilate* K. 165, MOZART *Laudate Dominum* from *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* K. 339, HAYDN *Te Deum*, *Hob. XXIII:2c* and MOZART *Regina Coeli*, K. 108.

The next major performance of 2024 will be the second running of *Symphonia Choralis* – a collaboration between The Gisborne Singers and Bendigo Symphony Orchestra, this time featuring MAHLER *Symphony No. 2 in C minor*, "Resurrection". The performance will be held at the Ulumbarra Theatre in Bendigo on Sunday, November 24th. Once again we will be sourcing other choirs and singers to join with us for a weekend of singing, culminating with the Mahler.

The final concert of the year will be the second running of *A Gisborne Singers Christmas* held on Saturday December 7th at Our Lady of the Rosary in Kyneton.

If you happen to be moving to the Macedon Ranges and are interested in joining our choir, February is a good time to come along. We rehearse from 7:30 - 10pm on Wednesdays at the Gisborne Uniting Church in Brantome St, Gisborne.

Enquiries: www.gisborne.harmonysite.com

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Alison Kinghorn

VOX ANGELICA GEELONG CHAMBER CHOIR

Vox Angelica Geelong Chamber Choir repeated their May 7th Geelong Gallery concert, "Atmosphere", a programme of reflective music as part of the fabulous exhibition of the paintings of Clarice Beckett. The September 17th performance was in St Paul's, LaTrobe Terrace, and the music suited the church's exquisite acoustics beautifully. There was standing room only so booking for future concerts looks like a good idea! We also were the opening concert for the 10-hour fundraising "Jam for Refugees" event at St Paul's on Saturday 28th of October, a highly successful day.

In 2024, our first performance is at 5.30pm on Saturday 20th of April at Geelong Gallery and will be repeated at St Paul's LaTrobe Terrace at 5.00pm Sunday 28th of April. It is entitled "The Saddest Sound, The Sweetest Sound". Starting with 17th century Spanish composer, Alonso Lobo, and works by Mendelssohn and Stanford, the programme moves on to ANZAC Day with *Waves of Gallipoli* by Melissa Dunphy, *The Old Lie*, a setting of a poem by Wilfred Owen composed by Stephen Leek, and *Prayer for Ukraine* by Valentin Silvestrov, Ukraine's "most famous living composer". The last bracket includes two pieces from *The Lost Birds: Extinction Elegy* by US composer, Christopher Tin, and *Birds* by Australian Iain Grandage.

Tom Healey (Director)

THE COLAC CHORALE

The Colac Chorale have welcomed a number of new singers to our group...and just now, we are preparing for our Christmas Season timetable.

This includes taking part in a Service of Lessons and Carols at St John's Anglican Church on 17th December...and Christmas Carol singing at the various Aged Care Homes.

Our Chorale Concert is now planned for Sunday, 10th March 2024.

Finally, we send Christmas greetings and best wishes to all Choral Grapevine Choirs.

Gwenyth Knox

TIDES OF WELCOME

QMF celebrated their 25th year as a festival while we celebrated 20 years as a community choir. Our intention was to have all four previous choir directors, Sarah Carroll, Rose Bygrave, Tiffany Eckhardt and Andrea Robertson, along with current choir director, Wayne Jury, all on the one stage with us for our performance on Sunday 26th Nov on the Glanuse Stage. We nearly pulled it off with the exception of Tiff who couldn't make it due to illness. However, we did sing two of her songs which we had performed in readiness for the occasion.

The sound on the day was great as was the attendance of the rather large crowd for a Sunday morning. How good was it to see so many previous choir members in the audience!

Wayne started us off with a few of our songs we had performed earlier in the year and then we launched into Tiff's songs, "Beautiful World" and "Sea around the Shore". We then followed up with two of Andrea's songs, "A Time for

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all these Things" and "Lighthouse" followed by Rose with "You Send Me" and "Eraerama". Sarah then took to the stage, and we sang "Water Bearer" and "Sea of Love".

All were crowd pleasers and Wayne added to this special event by directing "Love Me like a Rock" to complete the set. Yes, we even had people dancing!!

What a morning it was and a special thanks to all choir directors and the love we felt from the community and QMF!

Paul Jones

THE GEELONG CHORALE

Our Christmas concert this year features music from the Baroque period. The *Magnificat* by Pergolesi has been wrongly attributed to him for the past century, having in fact been composed by Francesco Durante (1684-1755), an Italian composer of mainly church music who was Pergolesi's composition teacher. We will also sing a stunningly beautiful chorus from *The Christmas Story* by Heinrich Schütz. Schütz is considered to be the finest German composer prior to J. S. Bach, and his prolific output had an enormous influence on music in Germany. To finish the programme: Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Along with Bach and Handel, Vivaldi (1678-1741) ranks as one of the greatest baroque composers, with a prolific output of more than 500 concertos, 50 operas and many choral works, of which his *Gloria RV 589*, is probably the best known and loved. For this performance we are joined by soloists and a chamber ensemble led by Patrycja Radzi-Stewart.

Allister Cox OAM Musical Director

The Geelong Chorale has an exciting program planned for 2024. First, **Orient Express** takes audience members on a tour – listening to music which might be heard on this historic train. The second concert is **Karl Jenkins' Requiem** presented with orchestra and soloists. Finally, in **Ave Maria**, in anticipation of Christmas, the Chorale presents music from the Marian tradition.

The Geelong Chorale is delighted to welcome back Allister Cox and Kristine Mellens as musical director and accompanist respectively for 2024.

For any singers wishing to join The Geelong Chorale, we commence our 2024 program on Monday January 29, 2024, at 7.30pm at St Luke's Uniting Church, Barrabool Rd, Highton. Potential singers are welcome to come along to a few rehearsals to see if this is what they would like, and after this, will be invited to attend a short, non-threatening audition. This is to ensure singers are in the correct part of the ensemble, and to enable our musical director to get to know you. If you want any more information, please contact our secretary, Angela West on 0448363781.

Angela West (Secretary)

MOUNT GAMBIER CHORAL SOCIETY

The Mount Gambier Choral Society very proudly celebrated 90 Years of their involvement in the community, on Saturday, October 7. Invited groups to help with this event, included STRUMS UKELELE, Millicent Choral Society and members of the Mt Gambier City Band WARWAR group. A most gratifying event for all who attended. We are now organising to sing carols at several of our Nursing Homes in Mt Gambier. Aspirations toward another event with an accompanist next year. Wishing all our fellow singers a joyous Christmas, and productive 2024.

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Cathryn Rochow, President, Mt Gambier Choral Society

GEELONG WELSH LADIES CHOIR

Celebrating our 25 year anniversary this year has been really exciting. Our major concert in July was a huge success with it being a sell out one month before performance.

Then in November of this year we travelled to Melbourne to take part in the Armistice Service in the Welsh Church. What an honour to be part of such a memorable occasion.

We also travelled from the church onto Gisborne where we performed at Gisborne Uniting Church to another packed audience. Here the choir was supported by a mother and daughter team with Rachel Williams on the violin was accompanied by her mother Ruth. Truly a magical day.

The choir has also teamed up with Waurm Ponds Community Church to celebrate CHRISTMAS on Sunday December 10th at 3pm. It is our pleasure to be able to perform a free concert with the church, supporting the true meaning of Xmas.

Next year we have already much in the calendar with singing at the Welsh Singing Festival (Gymanfa Ganu) in Melbourne, singing at the Shrine of Remembrance on June 6 accompanied by a military band and then a major concert on June 30 with the Victorian Welsh Male Choir.

Exciting times ahead.

Jeanette Johns

GEELONG HARMONY CHORUS

Report for Choral Grapevine

Geelong Harmony are looking for more new members to come and join us and anyone is welcome to attend our regular Monday night rehearsals at Herne Hill. Geelong Harmony Chorus is a diverse and vibrant group of people who, through the joy of 4-part a cappella singing, strive to enrich the lives of our members and our audiences with beautiful harmonies that touch the heart. Our motto is Harmony with Heart.

Please contact our membership manager for further details on mob 0406 666 737 or email contact@geelongharmony.com.au

We have a busy Christmas line up, including a charity concert to support Dementia Australia, the Ocean Grove Christmas Carols and Portarlington Carols. We'll also be singing at Market Square Shopping Centre in Geelong from 12 to 2pm on Saturday 9th and 16th – a great opportunity to hear fine singing as you shop! We hope to see some familiar and new faces at these events to support us.

Moving into next year we will be continuing to work towards our national convention with Sweet Adelines Australia in Fremantle from 16th to 20th May, 2024.

Christmas Calendar items

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Corina Hassett (Performance and Events Manager) Mob: 0409 923 814

Choirs in The Choral Grapevine network in 2023:

Apollo Bay: Apollo Bay Community Choir **Ballarat:** Ballarat Choral Society, U3A Choristers Ballarat, Vox **Berr:** Riverland Choral Group, **Bordertown:** Bordertown A Cappella Singers, **Camperdown:** Camperdown Uniting Church Choir, **Casterton:** Sacred Heart Church Choir, **Cobden:** Cobden Community Choir, **Colac:** Colac Chorale, **Deans Marsh:** Deans Marsh Singers, **Drysdale:** Coryule Chorus, The Bellarine Community Choir **Geelong:** acabellas, Bella Mama, The Geelong Chorale, Geelong Harmony Chorus, Geelong College Community Choir, Geelong Trades Hall Choir, Geelong Welsh Ladies Choir, Geelong Youth Choir, The Gesualdo Consort, Sing Geelong, St Luke's Uniting Church Choir, St Mary's Basilica Choir, Geelong, St Paul's Church Choir, U3A Geelong Choir, Windfire Chamber Choir, With One Voice Geelong, Windfire Chamber Choir, Wondrous Merry, Vox Angelica Chamber Choir, Vox Box Community Choir **Gisborne:** The Gisborne Singers **Hamilton:** Footprints the Choir, Good Shepherd Choir, Hamilton Singers, Tabor Male Choir, **Lavers Hill:** Lavers Hill Choir, **Millicent:** Millicent Choral Society, **Mt Gambier:** Mayfair Youth Jazz, Mount Gambier Choral Society, Mt Gambier Christ Church Anglican Choir, **Naracoorte:** Naracoorte Singers, **Penola:** Southern Heritage Singers, **Port Fairy:** Port Fairy St Johns Anglican Church Choir, **Queenscliff:** Tides of Welcome, **Torquay** Surfside Singers **Warrnambool:** Cantori, Warrnambool Christ Church Choir, Merri Singers, Red Tent Singers, Tin Shed Singers, Warrnambool St Johns Presbyterian Choir

Please let me know if there are any other choirs in your area, so we can invite them to become part of our Choral Grapevine family.

Choral Calendar

Date, time, venue	Performance details
Sunday 26th November, 10.45 , Queenscliff Neighbourhood House	TIDES OF WELCOME 20th Anniversary This concert is part of the Queenscliff Music Festival.
Saturday 2 December 8.30pm Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 53 Ebden Street, Kyneton	CHRISTMAS WITH THE GISBORNE SINGERS Tickets Trybooking
Saturday 2 Dec at 3PM Sterling Place Community Centre DUNKELD	BAROQUE CHRISTMAS <i>The Australian Chamber Choir</i> conducted by Douglas Lawrence. https://www.auschoir.org/2023-concerts/
Saturday 2 December 3pm , St Lukes Uniting Church, Barrabool Road, Highton	AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS – Gian Carlo Menotti \$35/\$25 \$45 Family (2 adults, 2 children) additional children \$5. Trybooking
Sunday 3 December 3pm Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Hamilton	HAMILTON SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT This Christmas concert will feature the Singers as well as a few guest artists, instrumentalists of our local area. Many carols will be sung and enjoyed. Tickets are \$15 and afternoon tea is also supplied.
Sunday 3 December, 3.30pm , St Pauls Church, 10 Dudley Parade, St Leonards	HOW SWEET THE SOUND: HYMNS OF THE FAITH Come to St Paul's and sing your favourite hymns, old and new. Followed by a cuppa and home-made afternoon tea.
Sunday 3 December at 3PM , Basilica of St Mary of the Angels GEELONG	BAROQUE CHRISTMAS <i>The Australian Chamber Choir</i> conducted by Douglas Lawrence. https://www.auschoir.org/2023-concerts/
Thursday, 7 December, 1.30-3.15pm , St James Church Hall 55 Collins St, Drysdale	OPEN REHEARSAL – CORYULE CHORUS Full details on web page and Facebook. https://www.coryulechorus.com/ https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083597670948
Thursday 7 December, 2pm , Geelong RSL	GEELONG HARMONY – Concert to support Dementia Australia
Saturday 9 December 5pm , All Saints Church, Noble Street, Newtown	GLORIA: MUSIC TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS – The Geelong Chorale ☑ \$35/\$30(conc.) Enquiries – 0449 363 781 trybooking.com/CMTHR
Saturday 9 December and Saturday 16 December, 12-2pm , Market Square Shopping Centre, Malop Street Geelong	CAROLS AT MARKET SQUARE GEELONG HARMONY Get into the Christmas spirit as you do your Christmas shopping.
Saturday 10 December 7.30-9.30pm , Ocean Grove Car Park, Cnr Presidents Ave and The Avenue, Ocean Grove	OCEAN GROVE CHRISTMAS CAROLS featuring <i>Geelong Harmony</i> Free event

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Date, time, venue	Performance details
Saturday 9 December at 3PM Thomson Memorial Church TERANG	BAROQUE CHRISTMAS <i>The Australian Chamber Choir</i> conducted by Douglas Lawrence. https://www.auschoir.org/2023-concerts/
Sunday 10 December 3pm All Saints Anglican Church, Millicent	SERVICE OF 9 LESSONS AND CAROLS The <i>Millicent Choral Society</i>
Sunday December 10th at 3pm , Waurin Ponds Community Church	CHRISTMAS <i>The Geelong Welsh Ladies Choir</i> . It is our pleasure to be able to perform a free concert with the Church , supporting the true meaning of Xmas. All welcome.
Friday 15 December, 7.30-9.30PM , W.G. Little Reserve Wadawurrung Country, Behind the Senior Citizen's in Newcombe St, Portarlington	PORTARLINGTON CHRISTMAS CAROLS , featuring <i>Geelong Harmony</i> Free event
Friday 15 December, at 7.30pm, the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, Yarra Street, Geelong	WINDFIRE CHRISTMAS CONCERT – conducted by Joseph Hie, featuring Oratorio de Noel, Op 12 by Saint-Saens and Fantasia on Christmas Carols by Vaughan Williams. With The Geelong Youth Choir. Tickets \$50 Full; \$45 Seniors; \$40 Concession available from www.trybooking.com/CFGTN or at the door
Sunday, 17th December, 3pm and 5pm , St Paul's Anglican Church, La Trobe Terrace, Geelong	FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS - Join us for this very popular Carol Service in the tradition of Kings College, Cambridge, in the beautiful setting of St. Paul's. Directed by Dr. Terry Norman and featuring the outstanding choir of St. Paul's and the St. Paul's Occasional Choir. A community event not to be missed. Arrive early to secure your seat. Parking available at the church and nearby.
Sunday, December 17, 2pm , St John's Anglican Church, Colac	CEREMONY OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS <i>The Colac Chorale</i> Check the Choral Calendar closer to the date for the time of this service.
Sunday 17 December, 7.30 , Christ Church, Henna Street, Warrnambool	COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON presented by <i>Cantori</i> Enquiries 0437955887
Sunday 25 February, 5pm , Basilica of St Mary of the Angels, Yarra Street, Geelong	Celebrate St. David's Day with THE AUSTRALIAN MALE WELSH CHOIR
Sunday, 10th March, 2pm 2024	THE COLAC CHORALE IN CONCERT
Sunday 24 March, 2024, 5pm , Basilica of St Mary of the Angels, Yarra Street, Geelong	WINDFIRE CHOIR EASTER CONCERT: REQUIEM - Gabriel Fauré Windfire Choir and Orchestra, Manfred Pohlenz - bass

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Date, time, venue	Performance details
Saturday April 20, 2024 5.30pm, Geelong Art Gallery	THE SADDEST SOUND, THE SWEETEST SOUND <i>Vox Angelica</i> , conducted by Tom Healey
Sunday 21 April, 2024 5pm, Basilica of St Mary of the Angels, Yarra Street, Geelong	AGATHA IN VIVALDI'S VENICE - <i>Australian Chamber Choir</i> conducted by Douglas Lawrence Tickets from www.auschoir.org.au
Sunday April 28, 2024, 5pm, St Paul's La Trobe Terrace, Geelong	THE SADDEST SOUND, THE SWEETEST SOUND <i>Vox Angelica</i> , conducted by Tom Healey
Sunday April 28, 2024, Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Kyneton	A CLASSICAL CELEBRATION – <i>The Gisborne Singers</i> Including works by Handel, Mozart and Haydn.
Sunday May 5, 2024 St Mary's Anglican Church. Sunbury	A CLASSICAL CELEBRATION – <i>The Gisborne Singers</i> Including works by Handel, Mozart and Haydn.
Sunday 5th May 2024 at 2:30pm	ORIENT EXPRESS <i>The Geelong Chorale</i> Music you may hear while journeying on this luxury train.
Sunday June 30, 2024, 3pm, The Potato Shed, Drysdale	GEELONG WELSH LADIES CHOIR and VICTORIAN WELSH MALE CHOIR
Sunday 18th August 2024 at 2.30pm	KARL JENKINS: REQUIEM presented by <i>The Geelong Chorale</i> Performed with soloists and orchestra.
Sunday, November 24th, 2024 Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo	SYMPHONIA CHORALIS – <i>The Gisborne Singers</i> and <i>Bendigo Symphony</i> Orchestra Featuring Mahler's <i>Symphony No. 2 in C Minor</i> ("Resurrection"). Again we will be sourcing other choirs and singers to join with us for a weekend of singing prior to this concert. Keep your eye out for more details – including how your choir can participate. https://gisborne.harmonysite.com/
Saturday 30th November 2024 at 5:00pm	AVE MARIA <i>The Geelong Chorale</i> In anticipation of Christmas, a program of Marian music.
Sunday December 7th 2024, Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Kyneton	A GISBORNE SINGERS CHRISTMAS https://gisborne.harmonysite.com/