

## Greetings from the Chorale to all our friends

It has been many months since our previous issue of Tune In at the beginning of March.

The Chorale, like so many groups in the performing arts, has been in extended recess due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our early decision to cease rehearsals in mid-March was a painful but necessary one, motivated by our concern for the safety of our singers and audiences alike.



But this doesn't mean that we have lost touch with each other as a community of singers, a "family" with singing and music at its heart.

Turn to page 4 to read about how the choir has been keeping in touch and singing through the pandemic!

Nor does it mean that we have abandoned all hope of performing again. Read on and you will find out about our exciting plans for 2021.

## Bells won't be ringing for the Chorale this Christmas

JIM FAGAN

It will be a Silent Night this Christmas for Noosa Chorale.

With great reluctance the choir's committee has decided that, because of restrictions caused by Covid 19, it will not be possible to stage its annual, much anticipated Christmas Cheer Wassail this December.



"Concerns for the health and welfare of our singers will make it inadvisable for us to hold rehearsals at this time," President Gai Ramsay told Tune In.

"Likewise, the need for essential social distancing would significantly reduce audience numbers."

Gai said the theme this year was to be "Ring Out the Bells of Hope and Joy" with the message of better times to come. Sadly, the better times are still a little way off in the future.

"I'm also disappointed our music director, Adrian King, has been unable to celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of conducting choirs. (See story pages 2 and 3).

"We are, however, excited about getting back to rehearsing on the 2nd of February, in preparation for our first of three main concerts for the year.

"We have confirmed a May booking with The J Theatre for our "Spirit of Olympia" concert.

"Our timing for the concert is good to herald the Tokyo Olympic Games which have been rescheduled for August 2021."

Gai said she was hoping Hungarian-born soprano Judit Molnar and tenor David Kidd (Tenori trio) would still be available.

"They were so looking forward to taking part in the concert this year."

**MUSICAL NOTE:** The May concert will feature music that has inspired the world's greatest athletes since the first Modern Games in 1896.

It will include *Chariots of Fire* (related to Paris, 1924), *The Hallelujah Chorus* (Berlin, 1936), *Time to Say Goodbye* (Jose Carreras and Sarah Brightman, Barcelona, 1992), and many more.

The 44-piece Noosa Symphony Orchestra will be conducted by Adrian King and, to add to the excitement of the performance, giant screens on either side of the stage will show rare photographs of historic Olympic moments.

Put the concert dates for "Spirit of Olympia" into your 2021 calendar, along with dates for our other two major performances for the year.

### 2021

#### "Spirit of Olympia"

Friday 28 and Saturday 29 May

#### "The Seasons in Sound and Colour"

Friday 17 and Saturday 18 September

#### "Wassail—Christmas Cheer"

Friday 17 and Saturday 18 December

# Adrian marks a milestone

JIM FAGAN

Congratulations to Noosa Chorale's music director, Adrian King, as he celebrates 50 years of conducting choirs and symphony orchestras this year.



And commiserations because the Covid 19 pandemic and the cancellation of concerts has meant he hasn't had anything to conduct in this his golden jubilee year.

"It's been a bit frustrating," Adrian said. "I was looking forward to the Chorale's 'Spirit of Olympia' concert in May. I was privately considering it my gold medal concert but, of course it has been postponed until next year."

Adrian (69) recalls taking over the baton when he was just 19 for one of his mother's choirs, the Caistor Male Voice Society in Lincolnshire in the U.K.

"My mother played the piano and organ and was director of local choirs. My dad was a tenor and the house was filled with music every night."

He received his musical training at the London School of Music, which he attended with Andrew Lloyd Webber, and later Guildhall School of Music in London, specialising in singing, conducting, piano and French horn. He was awarded his licentiate diploma in music from Trinity College London.

He enjoys working with children and was director of music for 19 years at St James Choir School in Grimsby, a highlight of his time there conducting a combined schools' choir at the Royal Albert Hall.

Another was conducting the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. "Just by chance the local council was building a new auditorium and invited the school choir to sing *Carmina Burana*. I was asked to conduct and I immediately said 'Yes.'"

It's intriguing, however, to reflect that this inspirational musician wouldn't be with us had it not been for a young surfer from Minyama, Baron Symes, deciding to look for waves in the north of England.

This started off a chain of events with Baron and his mate Craig Smith marrying Adrian's two daughters, Sarah and Louise, both professional string players, and moving to the Sunshine Coast to live.

Eight years later in 2006, Adrian and his soprano wife, Helen, followed them to be with family.

Adrian lives at Buddina adjacent to Minyama and admits it felt "very strange" when they heard the girls were marrying a couple of Australians.

"We were happy for them as they were following their hearts but it was very tough to know the girls were moving to the other side of the world.

"It took a few years but we decided to move to Australia as well. I asked Louise to look out for some jobs that might interest me and that's how I started—first with Noosa Chorale, which I still conduct and later the Sunshine Coast Choral Society and the Sunshine Coast Symphony Orchestra.



Noosa Chorale singers horse around with Adrian in 2007

Since taking over the Chorale from Leonard Spira in 2007, Adrian has shown himself to be a lively, dedicated musician conducting everything from Christmas carols and traditional folk song to great classical choral works.

The esteem in which Adrian is held for his enormous leadership contributions to music in the region was acknowledged in 2016 by a Noosa Electorate Queensland Day Award conferred by then State MP Glen Elmes.

"I have been fortunate in the last 13 years to be involved musically with some extremely talented musicians and very fine singers." ...continued next page



Adrian King (centre front) with St James Choir School, Grimsby UK, in the mid-1970s

2016: Noosa Electorate Qld Day Award



conferred by Glen Elmes MP

### Is there one work Adrian would especially love to conduct?

“Three works actually - Rachmaninoff’s Vespers, Dvorák’s Requiem and Stabat Mater, but otherwise I have fortunately been blessed with being able to conduct all the popular and ‘classical cornerstones’ of the music repertoire.”

### What is the most challenging aspects of being a conductor?

“Firstly, arriving at the correct balance of choosing a work to perform – to allure the hopefully ‘full house’ audience and then to appeal and stimulate the musicians to a wonderful and magnificent performance.

“Secondly, planning rehearsals and, hopefully, having enough time with full attendances of singers to make certain adjustments in tempo, articulation, phrasing and breath marks as well as relaying my vision of the finished work to the performers.”

### And the most fulfilling?

“Producing an exciting and breathtaking musical performance devoid of flaws which satisfies and stimulates both the listener and performer alike to realms of sheer musical bliss!”



Adrian conducts the choir at his 10th birthday party in 2017 as Music Director of the Chorale.



Adrian with daughter Louise (centre) and other soloists at the 2017 Viennese Masters concert: (from left) Kathryn O'Halloran, Naomi Bakker, Tom Holownia, and Oliver Boyd.



Adrian conducts the audience carol-singing at the Christmas Wassail in 2018.

### Adrian's 5 tips for choristers

- ◆ Perform to the best of your ability in a fun, creative and friendly atmosphere but apply a certain amount of discipline and politeness.
- ◆ Listen to the conductor and take instruction on board. Accept personal responsibility to learn your part and be attentive.
- ◆ Do not hurt, upset or exploit any other choir members, be helpful and supportive instead. Remember that music-making in a choir is a team effort and then, finally, don't talk while others are learning.
- ◆ In fact, while I am rehearsing another part it is an ideal opportunity to learn and cement what you know already and go over the words as the others are singing. Sing your own part in your head to develop a clear sense of the structure of the song. Learn the other parts, if possible, to get a better understanding of the music.
- ◆ Remember – “you don't practise to get things right; you practise so that you can't get it wrong!”

## Why the Chorale is called a community choir

JIM FAGAN

Six Noosa Chorale singers provided the accompanying music for a video which Noosa Council entered in a Queensland-wide Local Government Management Association event in Brisbane recently.

And, according to Jane Harding, Council heritage librarian, “The video was one of the best there. It was marvellous. What a talented bunch you are.”

It all started when I was asked by Jane one Tuesday two months ago if the Chorale could help with some singers. She said a video had been made of council staff members taking part in activities serving the community.

It would be featured in the annual state-wide Local Government Management Team Challenge but she was having difficulty finding people to sing the lyrics her team had written to the

theme tune of The Brady Bunch, a popular TV show in the 1960's and 70's. She asked if she could have it by the following Monday.

Calls were made, resulting in Pam Sage doing an amazing job of transposing the music to a singable set of notes, Gai Ramsay providing the accompaniment



From left: Pam Sage, Jonathan Anstock, Marianne McLennan, Ian Jobling, Jim Fagan and Gai Ramsay (front)

on her grand piano in her home at Tewantin, Johnathan Anstock using an iPhone to record the vocals, and the rest of the team, Ian Jobling, Marianne McLennan and me joining with Gai, Pam and Jonathan to put down the song.

And John Davies deserves special mention for taking the iPhone recording and by sheer, digital magic producing the sound which has impressed Jane so much.

**PERFORMANCE NOTE:** The team met on Saturday of that week, took an hour to practise and then make the recording, John Davies received it on Sunday and I sent it to Jane the same day. The Monday deadline was met.

## Chorale singers keeping in touch—virtually

As soon as it became apparent in mid-March that the Chorale would not be singing together at The J Theatre, at least for some time, we quickly sprang into action to develop a virtual way of keeping in touch.

The first "Keeping in Touch Bulletin" hit singers' email inboxes towards the end of March and it hasn't stopped since.

Every Bulletin has included greetings messages from singers with news of what they've been up to, ideas to share of what to watch, listen to, and read, quizzes and fun things choral....

Maestro Adrian King has kept busy preparing practice files for the Bulletin that singers can download from the choir's shared drive to keep their voices tuned up at home. Listening with eyes closed to Adrian's familiar

introductions to each practice piece, one can almost feel transported back to The J for a Tuesday night rehearsal.

Accompanist Janet Brewer recorded a lovely piano serenade to include with her greetings to the choir.

We even had a small group sing a surprise "happy birthday" to soprano Marilyn Abel, using the Zoom app to bring real-time video and audio of Adrian and her fellow choristers to Marilyn's computer screen.

The Bulletin also enabled choir members to take part in a survey about their views on returning to rehearsals in these difficult times, and this became a prime source of information for the choir's committee in their decision-making about rehearsing and performing this year.



Janet Brewer serenades the choir



Zoom users sing happy birthday to Marilyn Abel

Bulletin 19 went out mid-August and we're still going strong.

## New choir risers for the Chorale

The Chorale has been successful in being awarded a grant of almost \$20,000 to replace our choir risers, those stepped platforms that enable the choir to stand on stage in tiered

formation, with every singer able to see conductor Adrian King, and of course Adrian able to see every singer!

When the opportunity came up to apply for a grant from the Queensland

Government's "Gambling Community Benefit Fund", we saw the chance to replace our old risers and were thrilled to have succeeded in our application.

And now, with the choir in COVID-enforced recess until next year, what better time to carry out the project!

There will be many advantages in replacing the old risers with new ones, including being able to fit more singers on stage ("social distancing"-dependent), in greater comfort and safety, and without the rattle and creak of our current risers.

The project will get underway soon, with the full support of our very helpful friends at The J Theatre. This excellent new development will be an exciting boost to our performances next year.



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