

It may be the Music of the Future, but it sounds remarkably like the Cacophony of the Present.

- Liszt's *Faust Symphony* as described by *The New York Musical Review*, December 23 1880



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

50
1965-2015

Special Anniversary Issue

50 Years

On January 1 1965 there was a bonfire on the site of what is now the Great Hall of the University. It marked the achievement of the autonomy of Newcastle University, previously part of the University of NSW.



As part of the fifty year celebrations, our choir presented a public performance in the foyer of the Newcastle Museum.

The first choir associated with the University was formed in 1960 by the Head of the Arts department, Bryn Newton-John. There were about forty members - mainly staff and students - performed Faure's *Requiem* at the opening of the Students' Union in late 1960. That was its only public performance - within a few years it was disbanded, due largely to a lack of male singers, according to the records. They seem to 'have found the strictly classical diet too heavy.'

The Newcastle University Choir first began rehearsals in 1976 under the baton of Ulric Burstein. The first concert took place in May, 1977, Verdi's *Requiem*, to an audience of 200 people. You can read the story of the choir since then on our website.

10 Years



Several members of the choir sang in the tenth anniversary concert of ChorusOz at the Opera House recently. Pictured are Peter McCloy, Carolyn Syme and John Mills - late for the photo shoot were Joanna Davies, Marie-Anne Hockings and Barbara Lyle.

It's a buzz to sing in the Opera House, especially with nearly 1000 voices under the baton of Brett Weymark, and once again we had the pleasure of backing Celeste Lazarenko, who sang so beautifully at our last concert.

Choristers travel from all around Australia and the world to participate in this annual event - this year we welcomed a group from Zimbabwe.

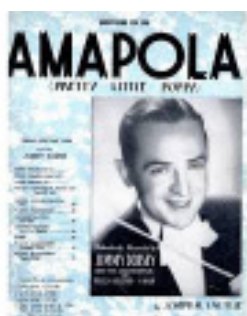
Brett Weymark says "ChorusOz is one of Sydney Philharmonia's proudest achievements and

certainly the one with the widest appeal. People with little experience of choral music can stand next to seasoned regulars united in the knowledge that life just would not be the same without these moments of collective expression.”

The same philosophy applies to the University Choir. Some of our members have been with us for thirty years or more, others have joined us for our next concert, and all you need is a love of music and the ability to sing in tune with a bit of practice!

Choose your own anniversary

Our next concert, *Swing Over the Pacific*, features music from the days of WWII through to the early 50s.



Believe it or not, some senior members of the choir remember these days, and many grew up during this exciting era. On the day that I was born, the number one tune on the charts was Glen Miller's *String of Pearls*. That was 38,594,406

minutes ago at the time of writing. I know this because I visited an internet site that allows you to find out what was heading the charts on any day you nominate, plus other information that you may or may not want to know. If you want to enter into the spirit of things the site also offers the option of telling you what was happening musically on the date of your conception - in my case, it advises, "Your parents got romantic 38,991,794 minutes ago to Jimmy Dorsey's *Amapola*". The wonders of the internet!

The number 1 hit on January 1, 1965 was Billy Thorpe's *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

Why not check out your own special song, come to our next concert and see if it's on the program?

You too will have the opportunity to swing along with the choir and the Dungeon Big Band on Sunday August 2 in the Great Hall - put on your dancing shoes!

"Play the gayest tunes in your book. Play them loud and keep on playing them, and never mind if a bullet goes through a trombone, or even a trombonist now and then."

- General Phillip Sheridan during the Civil War ordering his band to go to the front of the battle line to play .

Our New President



After four years as President, John Mills is semi-retiring as the Choir's president. At the AGM Bruce Rowland was elected as his replacement. When I say semi-retired, I mean that John, after serving for four years with great distinction, will stay on as Vice-President.

Bruce will be well known to those familiar with the arts in the Hunter. Many will know him as an inspirational teacher and former head of the Arts Department at Hunter TAFE.

You may not know him as a master puppeteer. He learned his art with the Marionette Theatre of Australia, with Peter Scriven and his Tintookies in the 60s. Subsequently Bruce formed the Newcastle Marionette Theatre, with a repertoire of ten productions featuring some 150 marionettes.

In April 2011 Bruce's daughter Eloise made her first appearance as a soloist in our *Choral Masterpieces* concert, reflecting the families long connection with music in Newcastle.

As Mark Widdup, Director of Cook Hill Galleries describes Bruce: "Imagine this art involvement? Marionette design and puppet making, Puppet concerts where he choreographs, writes and is the master puppeteer; drawings with all mediums – charcoal, pencil, conte crayon, pastel, crayon etc; figurative oil painting; art teacher and past TAFE principal administrator for over 40 years. Lover of music, choirs, opera, theatre and all who have reached a level of professionalism requiring dedication and commitment."

If it's relevant, or a sign of things to come, our former president was born to the strains of Glen Miller's *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, while the number one hit on President Bruce's birthday was Perry Como's *Prisoner of Love*.

Cacophony is edited by Peter McCloy on behalf of the Newcastle University Choir, who do not necessarily share the views of the editor. To contribute or to communicate, email us at newsletter@newcastleuniversitychoir.com

For more about Newcastle University Choir, go to www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com

Swing

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