



Friends' Newsletter

St Francis' Choir Inc. 326 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. 3000

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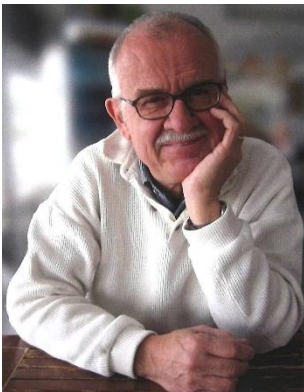
Director's Report

Dear Friends,

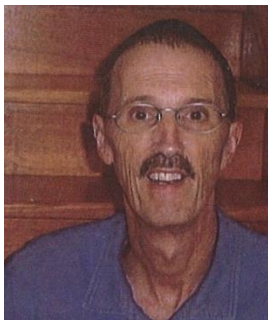
While it has been a long while between newsletters, I'm pleased to report that St Francis' Choir is enjoying its return to singing after two years of limited activity due to the pandemic. Apart from the very well attended ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter, we have also had joyous celebrations of Pentecost and Corpus Christi with Masses featuring solo organ parts (the Mozart *Organ Solo Mass*, K. 259 and Haydn's *Great Organ Mass*). The organ parts were played with flair by our own Anthony Halliday with choir and soloists accompanied as usual by the Symphonia of Melbourne.

The program for the second half of the year is also full of musical delights and we do hope you will be able to join us in person to experience these. Full details can be found on our website: www.stfrancischoir.org.au

While we have much to look forward to, it is also important to pause and remember the important contributions made by two long-term choir personalities.



In late April, former chorister Walter Remmen died after a short illness. Walter will be remembered as a passionate man, whose boundless enthusiasm would not take 'no' for an answer. With extraordinary vision, Walter was the driving force behind the choir's two overseas tours, using his contacts in Germany and other parts of Europe to realise what at first seemed like an impossible dream. The resulting tours were wonderful experiences for all those who took part, and they did much to cement the choir's reputation both in Australia and overseas. To Walter's wife Brigitte and family we extend our deepest sympathy.



While not a singer, Martin Brown made a hugely important contribution to St Francis' Choir by becoming choir treasurer and also treasurer of the St Francis' Choir Foundation. Through his prudent stewardship, Martin ensured that the future finances of both choir and foundation were established on the firmest of foundations. Martin's friendliness and gentle humour will be missed. Martin's wife Marilyn sang in the choir and served as music secretary for many years. To her and the Brown family we also send our deepest sympathy.

Speaking of finances, as we come to the end of another financial year, we would be very grateful if you could consider supporting the choir with a tax-deductible donation. Details of how to donate are included with this newsletter. Best wishes, **Tony Way, Director of Music.**

Spotlight on Ben Glover

St Francis' Choir has recently celebrated the solemnity of Corpus Christi with an uplifting performance of Haydn's *Great Organ Mass* with vocal soloists and the Symphonia of Melbourne. This year the feast day has an additional significance for tenor choral scholar Ben Glover – it marks the tenth anniversary of his first performance with the choir.

The intervening decade has been a richly rewarding one for Ben. After undergraduate



studies at Monash University, Ben then moved to Melbourne University where he graduated with a Master of Music (Opera Performance) in 2021. Student performances in operas such as Britten's *Albert Herring*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* have not only been vehicles for his fine, clear voice but have revealed a hidden talent for comic roles, something not obvious when Ben sings at Mass!

Singing with St Francis' Choir has nurtured Ben's interest in and love of sacred music, especially those works performed with orchestra. Therefore, in the last few years

Ben has enjoyed exploring the solo oratorio repertoire. This has been a fruitful exploration, for in August 2022 Ben competed in the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Competition, winning the Conductor's Encouragement Award. This past April saw Ben performing as soloist with the RMP in a stirring performance of Mozart's *Requiem* in St Paul's Cathedral and he will



perform the work again with the Geelong Chorale in August.

Other recent performances have included Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio* with the Victoria Chorale and the Art of Sound Orchestra and the *Mass in G minor* by Ralph Vaughan Williams with the

Geelong Chorale conducted by former St Francis' chorister Allister Cox OAM.

Photos: Ben performing at the RMP Aria (top), Ben after the Mozart Requiem with conductor Andrew Wailes (left) and soloists, Ben with Allister Cox OAM (second from left in bottom photo).



Above: Ben performing in the RMP Aria.

In addition to these wonderful experiences, Ben can be seen and heard most Sundays at St Francis' at the 11.00am Mass where he is an integral part of the choir's contribution to the liturgy, often being the cantor.

We are indeed blessed to have Ben in St Francis' Choir and continue to wish him well as his career develops.

In Brief - Marilyn Jamieson, Co-ordinator, Friends of St Francis' Choir

Welcome back to all our Friends. After such a long and challenging time dealing with COVID, it is wonderful to see and hear the choir back at the 11.00am Mass on a Sunday. This is a most encouraging sign that we are continuing to return to 'normal'.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we ask you to consider supporting the choir by renewing your membership to the Friends or by making a tax-deductible donation. You may do this by using the enclosed form or by using the EFT details included in this newsletter. As always, my thanks to all the Friends of the Choir for your continual support.

Donating to the Choir

- You can donate using the form accompanying this newsletter.
- Given the current delivery speed of ordinary mail, we encourage to use the donation facility on the choir website www.stfrancischoir.org.au or
- You can also donate by EFT:

St Francis' Choir
BSB 033068
Account 186383

If you are making an electronic donation, please email us at stfmusic@blessedsacrament.com.au to advise us of your donation and then we can issue a receipt.

Thank you!