

Newsclaf

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From the Editor

It's been an eventful time since our last issue with the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, and locally some important Branch events - our famous annual Midwinter Dinner in August, Prom Praise in the Sydney Town Hall in September and our Junior Schools Choral Festival in October. Reports about these Branch events follow in this issue along with news from Members and a range of articles for your interest.

Unfortunately we had to postpone our Kiama Choral workshop which was to have been held just before Prom Praise but we hope to hold it in 2023.

There will be a final (probably slimmer) issue of Newsclaf for this year at the beginning of December, so do send in details of your Christmas music.

Pamela Summers

Pamela Summers is the editor of Newsclaf and sings with the St Swithun's Anglican Church Choir Pymble and the Mater Chorale



Royal School of Church Music
AUSTRALIA
New South Wales Branch



Vale

Rosemary Anne “Rose” Cork

12 March 1937 – 29 June 2022

Rosemary Cork was a long time member of RSCM and served as the RSCM representative in the Southern Highlands for many years. Rosemary regularly attended Summer School until the last few years when her health deteriorated.

The Funeral Service to celebrate Rose’s life was held at St Jude’s Anglican Church, Bowral on 12th July 2022. May she rest in peace.

Meet Peter Black

one of your NSW Branch Committee Members

Back at the start of 2019, when your committee was in the midst of planning Sydney inSpires, I was approached about being part of the committee. The main reason was to assist with the organisation and logistics around the rousing finale to the week, Prom Praise.

Based down in the wonderful Sutherland Shire, I am a member of St Phils Caringbah where I have been since moving to Australia in 2004.

I trained as a professional cellist, firstly at University of Auckland then in London where I studied for a number of years with Derek Simpson. It is hard to break into the music scene anywhere and in London I think especially so. While studying I worked part time at Wigmore Hall, London’s wonderful chamber music venue, but after a while when no work was forthcoming, I decided to move into arts management full time.

During my time in London I played with All Souls Orchestra under Noël Tredinnick including many Prom Praises in London and further afield, including Moscow and Bulgaria.

Solo appearances included performances of Tchaikovsky *Variations on a Rococo Theme* in St Martin In the Fields, and part of Haydn *Cello Concerto in C* on tour with All Souls in Israel.



Peter in the orchestra rehearsing for Prom Praise in Sydney Town Hall in 2019



Since arriving in Australia my work has been in ticketing software offering IT support to clients. The cello still comes out for Sunday services at St Phils where I am often found either playing or leading singing in the band, as well as organising and leading a choir for our annual Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols.



Reports of Branch Events

The Famous Annual Midwinter Dinner

- Pamela Summers reports

A great night of fellowship and music, our annual Evensong and Dinner took place at St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood on 12 August 2022.



The choir of St Paul's under the direction of David Russell brought us Evensong, with Canticles by William Harris, Psalm 103 to a chant by Edwin Edwards, Smith responses and 'Rejoice in the Lord Alway' by Purcell as the anthem. Bailey Yeates, Organ Scholar, played and the Very Rev Peter G Williams AM VG gave the homily.

After the service, more than eighty diners sat down to dinner. We sang grace, and also a tribute to the late Martin How. A fascinating talk from Assoc Prof Dr Stuart Piggin on church music and revival completed a great evening. The text of the address is printed in full towards the end of this newsletter for those that missed hearing it.



Above: some of the dinner throng listening to the after dinner address by Assoc Prof Dr Stuart Piggin (inset at right)

Prom Praise

An evening of vibrant and exciting Christian worship

On 24 September 2022, Sydney Town Hall saw the return of Prom Praise in association with RSCM. After the successful event in 2019, it had always been the plan to return, but our dear COVID 'friend' put a stop to those plans. However, it was felt that it was time now to step out and hold another performance.



The Gospel Orchestra of Sydney was joined on stage by a combined RSCM Festival Choir, soprano Penelope Mills, tenor Ben Oxley, the CityAlight band from St Paul's Castle Hill, and compere Colin Buchanan all under the watchful eye and direction of musical director Ross Cobb.

The programme combined Christian music from many genres; from Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, and the Stanford *Te Deum* in B flat through rousing hymns

Above: Ross Cobb conducting at Prom Praise 2022. (Photo: Marcus Lim)

with the audience, and some of the encouraging and uplifting songs from the CityAlight crew including their new 'There Is One Gospel' from their recent album. Alongside these were orchestral and solo items such as Mozart's *Laudate Dominum* with the sublime voice of Penelope Mills and the Intermezzo and Easter Hymn from Mascagni's opera *Cavalleria rusticana*.

Also included in the evening was a Thought for the Day from English evangelist Greg Downes which resulted in a number of people making a commitment to Christ.

Those present in the audience gave the evening a rousing reception, many vowing to come again if repeated. When they lifted their voices in song, whether in "Praise My Soul The King of Heaven", or Matt Redman's song "10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)", one could not help but be moved by the wonderful sound of so many voices singing praise to our Lord.

Should the event be hosted again, I would not hesitate to recommend it to everyone, be that singing in the choir, playing in the orchestra, or bringing a group to be in the audience.

Peter Black

Peter Black is a Branch Committee Member of RSCM NSW and involved in many aspects of music ministry at St Phils Caringbah

Junior Schools Choral Festival 2022



On 18 October 2022 RSCM NSW was able to hold the first Junior Schools Choral Festival (JSCF) since 2019, the pandemic having disrupted the intervening years. Some 160 students and teachers from Arden, the King's School, SCEGGS, Trinity and St Andrew's Cathedral School gathered at St Andrew's Cathedral for a joyful afternoon of making music.

The Festival was led by conductor, Lachlan Massey, who immediately established a wonderful rapport with his young choristers. Lachie is the driving force behind Musgrove Opera, a company which he created in 2018 to present contemporary opera for children and families. Musgrove has staged productions of *Pinocchio!*, *Hansel and Gretel* and Fox & Vilé's *Sid the Serpent who Wanted to Sing* in venues including the Sydney Opera House. Lachlan also conducts the Sydney Children's Choir, was a 2018 Young Ambassador for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

and has acted as assistant music director for The Song Company.

The organist for JSCF was Callum Knox, who has been Organ Scholar at St James King St since 2020, and is majoring in Organ Performance at the Sydney Conservatorium. Callum is no stranger to St Andrew's Cathedral, having attended the cathedral school, and was Junior Organ Scholar during that time.



The combined schools choir enthusiastically and diligently prepared several music items for the service that followed: *Look there! The Christ, our brother!* (Bennet & Albright), *He that is down need fear no fall* (Vaughan Williams), *Day by Day* (Martin How) and *Walking in a Garden* (trad).

The rehearsal and the following service were punctuated by the now-traditional pizza delivery, where a team of willing RSCM helpers assisted intrepid van driver Josie Ryan unload numerous pizza boxes and set them out for the ravenous choristers.

With pizzas accounted for, proud parents arrived and the cathedral was filled for the service which was led by Ross Cobb, RSCM NSW Chair. Ross contributed a memorable sermon which featured his Punch and Judy puppets.

At right: Callum Knox, Ross Cobb & Lachlan Massey at the Junior Schools Choral Festival



(Photo: Naomi Spencer)

The children sang beautifully to Lachie's inspirational conducting and Callum's fine accompaniment, and the service ended with an uplifting congregational rendition of *In Christ Alone*.

RSCM NSW would like to thank St Andrew's Cathedral for ongoing support of this event, which reaches out to hundreds of local school children and parents to communicate God's love for them through music.

Philip Reichardt

Philip Reichardt is the Secretary both of the RSCM NSW Branch Committee and RSCM Australia National Council and is Director of Music at All Saints Church Hunters Hill



News from the choir of Christ Church St Laurence



The Choir of
Christ Church St Laurence
Railway Square, Sydney

Sam Allchurch
Director of Music

David Tagg
Organist

Musically, we have had a busy few months at Christ Church...

At the end of July, we were delighted to host a visiting choir from the Fullerton campus of California State University. As part of an Australian tour that took them to Sydney, Canberra, Bairnsdale and Melbourne, the CSU, Fullerton University Singers, directed by Dr Robert Istad, presented their programme *A Stone of Hope* at Christ Church St Laurence. Together with a selection of works by contemporary international composers, the Singers also performed Josef Rheinberger's *Cantus Missae*, in which the Choir of Christ Church St Laurence joined them for several movements. As international ensembles return to these shores our own, previously-postponed European tour is currently being re-planned for 2023-24, and we're looking forward to (collectively) getting back out into the world again!

In mid-August, we were once more able to celebrate our Patronal festival in the style to which we had become sadly unaccustomed in recent years. On St Laurence Day (10 August), the Choir sang the *Missa Sancti Johannis de Deo* by Haydn and Gabrieli's little-known but wonderfully-appropriate motet *Levita Laurentius* as part of the liturgy. In the Octave of St Laurence, Solemn High Mass – featuring Archer's *Missa Omnes sancti* and the *O quam gloriosum* of Victoria – was followed by a Parish lunch for 120 people, our first such event in three years. The Patronal festival concluded with Solemn Evensong and Benediction, with music by Stanford and Bullock, and Benediction hymn settings by Sumsion and Nicholson.

For the Parish's annual Orchestral Mass, presented to mark our Feast of Dedication, on Sunday, 11 September at 5pm the Choir, together with the Muffat Collective (our ensemble in residence) and soloists, performed the Haydn *Nelson Mass*; the service also included Parry's *I Was Glad* and *O Lord God* by William Johnson (the first Organist of the Parish).



Above: California State University, Fullerton University Singers dress rehearsal at CCSL Friday, 22 July 2022 (photo: Peter Hughes)

Recent organ recitalists at Christ Church St Laurence have included Mark Quarmby (St Stephen's, Macquarie St) on 18 September, Stacy Yang (Sydney) on 16 October and Martin Rein (University of Wollongong) on 20 November.

Please join us for an hour-long recital* at 5.30pm (usually) on the third Sunday of the month, immediately followed by the weekly service of Solemn Evensong. Entry is by 'note donation'.

The Choir of Christ Church St Laurence sings at the Parish's High Mass (10.30am) and Solemn Evensong (6.30pm) services each Sunday, as well as at selected weekday feasts. The scale of the music within each of these liturgies continues to be shaped by the NSW Health guidelines. All of our services are COVID-safe events, and everyone is welcome. Full details of music for all services is available [here](https://ccsl.org.au/music/music-lists/) (<https://ccsl.org.au/music/music-lists/>).

*<https://ccsl.org.au/music/organ-recital-series/>

Michelle Imison

Michelle Imison is the Publicity Officer, Choir of Christ Church St Laurence



*Calling all destined bell ringers;
St Mark's wants you!*

Each week, a small but committed group of quiet people come together at St Mark's Anglican Church in Darling Point to make a big sound. These are the members of St Mark's Darling Point Change Ringers, ringing bells high up in the church tower, to mark worship services, celebrate community weddings and herald other local and royal occasions. They are part of a wider community of change ringers in Sydney's church towers, joining together to learn, to challenge themselves and to celebrate a tradition lasting thousands of years.

One might think, given its size and pitch, a bell would be impossible to control. But bell ringing does not require musical ability nor a great deal of strength. And for those more familiar to the practices of campanology, mathematical ability is not a pre-requisite either. Come as you are! Various organisations, such as the Australian and New Zealand Association of Bellringers (ANZAB), provide formal resources for new learners. But for most beginners, it's simply spending time getting the feel of the motions with supervision from our dedicated teachers and experienced ringers.

Michael, a now regular member of the St Mark's Bell Ringer's, provides some insight into his first steps in becoming a bell ringer: "Getting started was easy as I had a great teacher...who would give me one on one lessons on a weekly basis. There is also a weekly group practice...with six or more ringers for when you have developed more control of your bell." Gaining individual confidence of the bell typically takes a couple of weeks, confidence in a group setting likely to be a few months and from there, the learning is endless. Our most experienced ringers still learn and try new things from the long list of historical "methods" and tunes.

If you are interested in getting involved, want to learn more, or maybe just see some bells in action then St Mark's is calling for you!

We are looking to expand our group and to hold new learners' sessions (interest permitting). We currently have established weekly practice sessions on Monday evening and Friday daytime, however, given the number of towers around Sydney and wider Australia, we can assist you with getting in touch with a tower most convenient for you. We'd love to hear from you, so please get in touch through our email address: bellringers@stmarksdp.org or browse the resources below.

Bell ringing resources

- A history of bell ringing at St Mark's can be found in "Honourable Engagement - St Mark's Church Darling Point: The First 150 Years" by Susan Mary Woolcock Withycombe, available for purchase at <https://checkout.square.site/buy/Q47Z6EV5FKMNA63KPWQZ67KG>.
- Hear the news and browse the towers on the Australian and New Zealand Association of Bellringers (ANZAB) website here: <https://www.anzab.org.au/>
- Join us for one of our services or many events at St Mark's Anglican Church detailed on our website: <https://stmarksdp.org>

See you in the tower!



Out and about

In this issue of Newsclef we meet Krzysztof (Chris) Czerwinski

In February 2022 St Alban's Anglican Church Epping welcomed Chris Czerwinski as its new Choir Director.

Chris was born and grew up in Poland. He studied there and in the USA, England and Australia (the Sydney Conservatorium of Music). His studies have included piano, organ, choral conducting, orchestral conducting, voice and church music. In Poland, Chris was the assistant conductor of the Poznan Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys and the founder and conductor of the Cathedral Chamber Choir. In England, he was assistant to the Director of Music at Lichfield Cathedral.

Chris has lived and worked in Australia since 2008, holding positions of Music Director at Christ Church Anglican Lavender Bay and Music Director at Macquarie Chapel Presbyterian Church.



The winner of many national and international competitions, awards, scholarships and study grants, Chris was granted a Distinguished Talent visa in March 2016 giving him permanent residence in Australia.

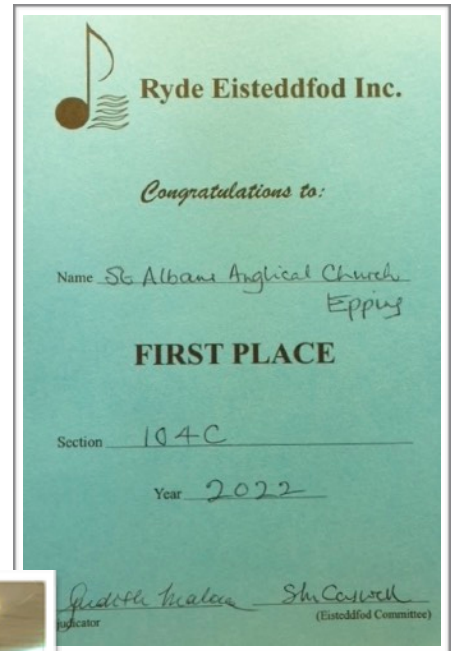
Since taking the position at Epping earlier this year, Chris has established two organ scholarships within the music program, and St Alban's currently has two organ scholars actively helping at Sunday services, choir rehearsals and performances. Chris says that the choir also is gradually growing, and he is proud of

their participation in the City of Ryde Eisteddfod earlier this year where the choir was awarded First Place in the Sacred Choral section and Highly Commended in the Community Choir section.

The adjudicator, Judith Malone, wrote in her report:

"The warm, even and well blended tone gave beauty to the spirituals; The parts were well balanced and the whole ensemble was well integrated; Phrases were rhythmically buoyant and shaped expressively; Commitment to the text and style; Clear diction; The tempo was well chosen; The rendition was elegant, the style was authentic and most suited to its sacred setting.

Most enjoyable and polished performance".



Chris at the rear on the left with the St Alban's choir and Christopher Lawn cellist.

And we meet Brian Leung, new 5.30pm Music Coordinator at St Mark's Anglican Church Darling Point

Brian Leung is responsible for leading worship, selecting music and coordinating musicians for the 5:30pm service at St Mark's Anglican Church Darling Point. Wendy Mulder from St Mark's talks with him about his role.

What inspired you to take on this role?

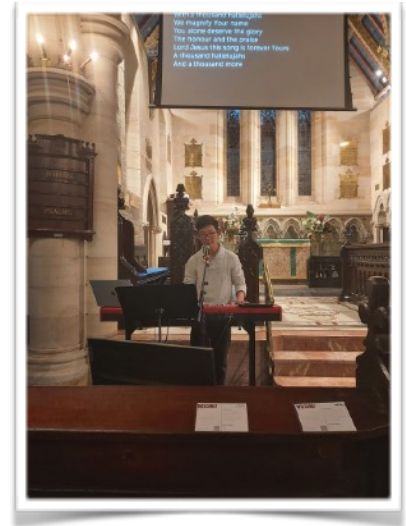
Music and singing is a deep part of the Christian tradition. As St Paul writes, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." (Colossians 3:16)



As we'd not had anyone lead our musical worship at the 5:30pm congregation for some time, and seeing as I had some experience with leading congregational singing and music, I was delighted to be asked to take on the 5:30pm Music Coordinator role in June 2022.

How are you hoping to have an impact on music and ministry at St Mark's through this role?

Increasing our participation in music is something I aim to do. I hope that it is a joy to sing together to our God and to one another. We strive for excellence, but we aren't perfectionists - it's more about the togetherness of the experience than it is about flawlessness. And I think it is encouraging when we see members of the congregation offer up their various gifts to worship God and to build one another up.



What does this role involve on an average Sunday/overall?

During the week, I am choosing and sourcing music and ensuring that our musicians and singers are ready for Sunday. On Sunday, we set up and practise for an hour before serving the church in the actual service. I sing, play piano, and sometimes troubleshoot the tech issues.

What do you enjoy about it?

I am enjoying seeing members of the congregation step up and give a go at playing and singing in the band. I'm also enjoying the creative and expressive outlet that playing and singing provide.

What are the challenges of this role?

I have a separate full-time role, so one challenge is managing my time well. At church, not many musicians or singers have a lot of experience with church bands and leading in services, so another challenge is to help the newbies grow in confidence and ability with lots of support and encouragement.

What have you found encouraging about it?

I think it has been a joy to see people step a little out of their comfort zones to sing in front of church or play guitar or piano for our congregation. And it's fun to think about new music we might introduce and to try to choose music that will point people to the truths and beauty of God.

What do you value most about St Mark's Darling Point and why?

I love that St Mark's is full of people who are earnest about following Jesus. I value the great teaching and preaching we get from our pastoral staff, and I see



lots of people serving one another through inclusion, conversation, hospitality, and many little acts of service.

St Mark's is a great place for someone who doesn't follow Jesus to learn more, through our Sunday services, Alpha course, or Connect Groups. And it's a great place for followers of Jesus to meet together, keep learning, and to show God's love to others.

For more information about St Mark's please visit <https://stmarksdp.org/>

Events



Invitation

The Organ Music Society of Sydney
The Royal School of Church Music

The Organ Historical Trust of Australia
Friends of the Sydney Town Hall

Invite you and your friends to a
FAREWELL DINNER
To celebrate Robert Ampt's 44 years of distinction as Sydney City Organist
TUESDAY 15th November, 6pm for 6.30pm
Cellini's Bar Restaurant
Level 2, Queen Victoria Building, George Street Sydney
Parking available—enter from York Street
All welcome—Bookings essential www.trybooking.com/CDMYH Enquiries: 0410 490 710



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O Magnum Mysterium

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Missa O Magnum Mysterium

Tomás Luis de Victoria

Motets by Carillo, Morales and Victoria

**Carols from Colombia, Iceland, Norway,
Portugal, Spain, and Venezuela**

3pm, Sunday 27th November 2022

St Joseph's Church, 2A Gordon St. Rozelle

Adult \$35 | Concession \$30 | Student \$20

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/CDXSS

Enquiries: 0410 505 562 www.coroaustral.org

Light & Shade

Saturday, 19 November | 7.30pm

Verbruggen Hall

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Live stream on Australian Digital Concert Hall



SAM ALLCHURCH Conductor
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A journey deep into the heart of hope. From German Baroque genius Heinrich Schütz, in his 350th anniversary year, comes an extraordinary vision of light in the most harrowing of circumstances: funeral music in the midst of war that stubbornly refuses to submit to despair. Surrounding this rich and profound work like the petals of a flower is the radiant beauty of music by JS Bach, John Rutter, the neglected 17th-century master Franz Tunder, and Australian composer Brooke Shelley, including a new work commissioned by the choir.

FRANZ TUNDER
Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ
German Magnificat

BROOKE SHELLEY
Praise the Lord

BROOKE SHELLEY

Heavenly Father (World premiere)

HEINRICH SCHÜTZ
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JOHN RUTTER
Hymn to the Creator of Light

JS BACH
Lobet den Herrn

Tickets: sydneychamberchoir.org or call 1300 661 738



Singing and the Revival of the Church

Speech given by Assoc Prof Stuart Piggin to RSCM NSW at the Midwinter Dinner at St Paul's Burwood on 12 August 2022

“THE ONLY PROOF HE NEEDED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD WAS MUSIC”

— Kurt Vonnegut

The Church's need of Revival

Have you ever given a talk aware that every member of your audience knows more about the subject than you do? Don't feel sorry for me. I'm used to it. But actually I had a very good reason to accept Philip Reichardt's invitation to address you. Seventeen years ago, I spoke here at the rededication of the Davidson organ, and for that purpose I told two organ jokes, and, since I thought they were under-appreciated, I'm giving you the chance to redeem the situation.

The following notice appeared in the church newsletter:

The concert held in Fellowship Hall was a great success.

Special thanks are due to the minister's daughter,
who laboured the whole evening at the organ,
which as usual fell upon her.

A vestry meeting had as item 8 on its agenda, 'purchase of candelabra'.

One parishioner said grumpily,

'I don't think we should purchase a candelabra.

We don't need it.

The organ makes quite enough noise,

And, if we have any money to spare, I think it should be used to improve the lighting.'

Just give me some indication, will you? Are you currently singing in a church choir or playing the organ or another musical instrument in church services? May I ask, Why are you doing that? What do you think you are achieving by doing that? What are you thinking about when you are singing? What has singing in the choir got to do with the future of the church? Is it helping the church to have a better future?

Well, you might agree the church needs all the help it can get these days. According to the census, to the media, to Peter Fitzsimmons and the *SMH*, that always independent newspaper, the church is on the way out. How can its decline be arrested? How can its health be restored? How can it be **revived**? What role could singing and music have in the **revival** of the church? How could your singing in the church choir contribute to genuine revival in the church?

One of the greatest glories of the church is its music. And great sacred music does not just happen. Great music, great singing, great hymns are the product of spiritual vitality, aren't they?

Charles Wesley's Hymns

The most obvious confirmation of that are Charles Wesley's hymns. Historian Mark Noll spoke of the 'inexhaustible reservoir of Charles Wesley's versifying genius'.^[1] He wrote 8,989 hymns, apparently, but not one of them before 1738 when he and his brother John were dramatically converted, and the Evangelical Revival began. Then, once converted, he wrote on average 10 lines of poetry per day for the rest of his life.

Was it good poetry? Were Charles Wesley's hymns good poetry, asked one historian of Methodism. He argued that they were because Wesley typically used strong adjectives. For example, in the second verse of 'O thou who camest from above' concerning the 'celestial fire', Wesley employed an adjective of six syllables!

There let it for thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return
With **fervent** prayer and **ceaseless** praise.

Wesley's hymns were conceived and written with passion, especially when he used them to teach the doctrines he loved. When those who argued that Christ died not for all but only for the elect, Charles wrote with the majestic confidence that brooks no contradiction. In the second and third verses of 'What shall I do my God to love?', Wesley wrote:

2 Your **sovereign** grace to **all** extends,
immense and **unconfined**; [more strong adjectives note]
from age to age it never ends,
to reach **all** humankind.

3 Throughout the world its **breadth** is known,
wide as infinity;
so wide it never passed by one,
or it had passed by me.

You might be an ardent Calvinist with a high doctrine of the elect, but when you sing Wesley's hymns, your doctrine changes! Most of us common everyday Christians in the pews or in the choir stalls get our theology from hymns, because they are more memorable and more enjoyable than reading textbooks of systematic theology. Historian Mark Noll observes: '... evangelical religion has always been more a singing than a sacramental, doctrinal, or even a preaching expression of Christianity'.^[2] Noll cites William Vincent, an Anglican priest, in 1787: 'for one who has been drawn from the Established Church by preaching, ten have been induced by music.'^[3]

Is great hymnody the product of spiritual awakening or is it instrumental in causing the awakening? Both surely. Wesley's hymns stemmed from the Evangelical Revival and helped to spread it, perhaps the major factor in the growth of Methodism. Methodism – 'born in song and borne along on song'.

Songs of the Welsh Revival^[4]

Some revivals seem to be more about singing than anything else. The famous Welsh Revival of 1904/5 was known as the Singing Revival, because the principal evangelist of the Revival, Evan Roberts, let the singing, led by women, take the principal place in his revival meetings. Reporting on the Welsh revival, journalist and publisher, William T. Stead, wrote:

The old objection of many of the Welsh Churches to the equal ministry of women has gone by the board. The Singing Sisters who surround Mr Evan Roberts are as indispensable as Mr Sankey was to Mr Moody. Women pray, sing, testify, and speak as freely as men – no one daring to make them afraid.^[5]

And Stead reported that ‘Hitherto the Revival has not strayed beyond the track of the singing people. It has followed the line of song, not of preaching. It has sung its way from one end of South Wales to the other.’^[6] He was asked, ‘is it all emotion? Is there no teaching?’ He answered, ‘Precious little. Do you think teaching is what people want in a Revival? These people, all the people in a land like ours, are taught to death, preached to insensibility. They all know the essential truths.’^[7]

Many evangelicals condemned this as retrograde,^[8] but others boasted of the fact: ‘the Gospel could be sung just as effectively as it could be preached’.^[9] Charles Alexander, of *Alexander’s Hymns* fame, said, ‘I look at a Gospel song as a sermon – a sermon on wheels, and when you teach a good Gospel song to [someone], it is like starting a wagon down a hill with the brakes off.’^[10] Even such a conservative Methodist preacher as W.H. Fitchett declared after a remarkable Mission in Melbourne in 1902:

Music, in its truest and highest office as the servant and vehicle of religion, has fulfilled its highest function. It set thousands of human souls vibrating in gladness. No one need doubt that the Gospel can be sung as effectively as it can be spoken.^[11]

One of the chief composers of songs popular in the Welsh revival was Robert Harkness, an Australian. He was known as the ‘the Bendigo Hymnwriter’. He was recruited for the purpose of composing and playing at evangelistic rallies by Charles Alexander himself. At one meeting in Wales, over which Evan Roberts presided, the hymn ‘Never lose sight of Jesus’ was sung 200 times.^[12]

Oh, Pilgrim bound for the heav'nly land,
Never lose sight of Jesus;
He'll lead you gently with loving hand,
Never lose sight of Jesus.

Chorus:
Never lose sight of Jesus,
Never lose sight of Jesus;
Day and night He will lead you right,
Never lose sight of Jesus.

But often as it may have been sung at that meeting, that was not the song most sung in the Welsh Revival. The song most sung was ‘The Glory Song’. It was launched on its international career in the 1902 Melbourne mission and was claimed to have ‘set Australia on fire’^[13]. ‘When I went to Australia’, wrote Alexander, ‘I determined that the “Glory Song” should be the great hymn of the

Mission in Melbourne ... The news of its popularity in Australia went everywhere, and thus started the song on its world-wide career.^[14]

When all my labours and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Oh, that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me,
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

These tunes sound rather American gospel to us – not particularly Welsh. An archetypal Welsh tune would be 'Aberystwyth'. Much loved by the Welsh, it reflects the calm smoothness and then the stormy roughness of the sea in Cardogan Bay off the West Coast of Wales. It was written by John Parry who represented in music the gentle swell of the water in the Bay followed dramatically by the stormy heaving of the seas which he took to be symbolic of the experience of the soul.

Jesu, lover of my soul

Such gentle rocking on the ocean of God's love

Let me to thy bosom fly

Here we are, in the Saviour's boat, such a reliable skipper

While the nearer waters roll,

Oh, this is nice, this gentle, rhythmic rocking, this is peace – or am I beginning to feel a little sea sick?

while the tempest still is high.

What's this? There is a storm raging out there, and it's coming quickly

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,

Protect me against the worst of the storm

till the storm of life is past;

Oh, this is a raging storm, but I am completely dry and safe, riding out the storm

Safe into the haven guide;

never doubting that you, Lord Jesus, will rise above the storm and quell it

O receive my soul at last.

The denouement. Back to the gentle rocking. Lord, I know for certain that at the last in this life and at the beginning of the next, you **will** receive my soul. Blessed assurance.

Rhythmic notes, rising and falling, that's Welsh hymnody.

So, the song which became known as ‘the love song of the Welsh Revival’ has the same quality of timeless calm, set to a tune I’ve never sung in church.

Here is love vast as the ocean
 Loving kindness as the flood
 When the Prince of life, our ransom
 Shed for us His precious blood
 Who His love will not remember?
 Who can cease to sing His praise?
 He can never be forgotten
 Throughout Heaven's eternal days

On the Mount of Crucifixion
 Fountains opened deep and wide
 Through the floodgates of God's mercy
 Flowed a vast and gracious tide
 Grace and love, like mighty rivers
 Poured incessant from above
 And Heaven's peace and perfect justice
 Kissed a guilty world in love

Well, whether American or Welsh, revival songs were sung in meetings by all present, over and over, astonishing those present with the rhythm of revived worship, singing in the rhythm of the Spirit:

- such harmonies, as all are affected in the same way – all reflecting on the sweetness of it all,
- such diminuendos as all present are hushed by the sacredness of it all,
- such rallentandos as all dwell on the glory of it all.

2. Jonathan Edwards and revival singing

Well, what you have had to endure so far are the random thoughts of an amateur. Let us go more deeply into the relationship between music and revival in the writings of the church’s greatest theologian of revival, namely the American philosopher theologian, Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, so a contemporary of Wesley.

We Australian Christians are not as familiar with Edwards as we should be. Some claim he is the greatest theologian in the whole history of the church. It is easy to find claims for him breathtaking in their extravagance:

Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones: ‘I am tempted ... to compare Luther and Calvin to the Himalayas, and Jonathan Edwards to Mount Everest!’ America's greatest living Church historian, Martyn E. Marty, has this to say, and it's a testimony which creeps up on you and suddenly ambushes you:

Recently I attended the meeting of the American Academy of Religion and related sciences. There were gathered together several thousand scholars and teachers of theology and biblical studies from throughout this country and some from other nations. It was, I thought to myself, probably the largest concentration of theological minds ever assembled in the United States at any time since Jonathan Edwards sat in his study alone.^[15]

Or, how about this accolade made by one Isaac Taylor 1831? He compared Edwards's 'athletic force of intellect' to that of Aristotle: 'We claim Edwards as an Englishman, he was such in every respect but the accident of birth in a distant province of the empire'.

Now, you never find this great theologian, teacher and preacher saying we need more preaching and teaching and less singing. Probably quite the reverse. Edwards was encouraged to sing from his youth. His father, Timothy, himself a minister, appointed a singing master to train the congregation in singing. Jonathan himself, when appointed a missionary to the Indians in Western Massachusetts, wrote to a singing master advising him of the great need to teach the Indians to sing. "They had good voices," he wrote, "and many of them were apt to sing and the job paid well." Edwards's diary reveals that he would sing in his own private devotions when he felt especially close to the Lord - he confessed that his heart was cold when he did not sing in his devotions. When he was 21 he fell in love with Sarah, then aged 16, and wrote an 'apostrophe' in tribute to her which is studied by Americans in their English literature classes:

She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after those times in which this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about, **singing** sweetly, from place to [place]; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what.^[16]

2.1 Edwards's Description of Revival

Certainly, no other has given us such an insight into religious experience in particular and the nature of revival in general. Revival came to his church in 1734 and his account of it at its height, has become perhaps the best-known account of a revival in church history:

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be the vainest and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner and increased more and more; souls did as it were come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light . . .

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; ... There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands . . . God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable [Ps. 84:1]. Our public gatherings were then beautiful..^[17]

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness [*Psalms* 96:9].^[18] It has been observable that there has been scarce any part of divine worship, wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises. Our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the external part of the duty before, the men generally carrying regularly and well three parts of music, and the women a part by themselves. But now they were

evidently went to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed.

Having experienced the real difference in the singing found in divine worship, come the revival, Edwards set about analysing and explaining the difference. He did so in a sermon he preached half in the morning and half in the afternoon on Thanksgiving Day, 13 November 1740, that is shortly after the beginning of the Great Awakening. The sermon is based on Revelation 14:3, 'And they sang a new song before the throne ... and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.' He entitled his sermon 'They sing a new song', and he asked who are 'they', why were they singing, and what was the new song?

Who are they? They are the 144,000 which is Bible-speak, 'not for a certain number, but for a great number,' that is for all the Redeemed, the 'true saints,' as Edwards would say, that is, the saved, including those converted so conspicuously in the revivals.

Why are they singing? Because God has put the divine melody in their souls and it gives them pleasure to sing the praises of him who redeemed them. Why do you sing in the church choir? It gives you pleasure. Psalm 135:3 'sing praises unto his name for it is pleasant'; Ps 147:1 'Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' Edwards comments: 'The melody is pleasant to the angels, and pleasant to the Lamb of God, and pleasant to him who sits upon the throne, and most pleasant to the soul that makes the melody.' 'And the duty of **singing** praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency to move our affections.'¹⁹ 'The great God is delighted with it. ..., He accepts of such praise and never rejects it. ... If we sing this new song in our public assemblies, it will be to worship God in the beauty of holiness, **and will be the way** to have God delighting to be in the midst of us.' And when congregations become aware that God is in their midst, delighting to be there, then revival comes.

What is the new song?

Humans already had plenty to sing about. It is great to be part of creation. The angels in heaven sang praises to God for the work of creation, when God laid the foundations of the earth, and the morning stars sang together. But it is greater still to be part of the new creation, and the new song of God's perfections in our redemption is a far greater song. Only those who have experienced this new creation in Christ can learn this song, for as the text affirms, 'no one could learn that song except they be redeemed.'

Learning it involves having knowledge of the 'subject matter of the song' which is 'spiritual and the things that are the subject matter of it are spiritual and divine.' The new song 'whenever it is learnt, must be learnt out of the gospel.' And 'none can truly understand the gospel of Jesus Christ but his redeemed ones.'

But the music must be learned as well as the words, and 'the music of this tune consists in the melody of the heart' Ephesians 5:19, 'speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.' [cf. Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15; James 5:13] 'So, in order to learn the music of this song, the heart must be tuned.'

It is Jesus who is the ultimate choir master. The Messiah is represented as leading the church in their sweet and joyful songs. *Psalms 22:22*, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee." Jesus must teach the new song, and the way Jesus teaches it is by causing our souls to hear the melody of his own voice in the gospel.

The implications of all of this are startling, perhaps we've never thought of them before.

1. *We sing and find such joy in singing ultimately because God is a singing God.*

This new song, says Edwards, 'is sung by Jesus Christ himself in heaven, and therefore tis called the song of the Lamb.' Jesus sings.

And God sings. *Zephaniah 3:17*, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with **singing**."^[20]

What are you thinking, what are you feeling as you sing in the church choir? How transformative might it be as you sing to reflect on the fact that God is not only delighted by your praise, but that he is celebrating his own joy over you by singing himself.

2. *Singing is not only pleasurable in itself and heart-warming to know that God takes pleasure in our singing, but it is also galvanising, equipping, arming for the fight.*

It is for spiritual warfare as well as spiritual worship. That singing is a weapon God uses in reviving the church by defeating the power of opponents, including the devil, is illustrated in the OT in accounts of the defeat of Israel's enemies in such passages as 2 Chronicles 20:19-21, where mighty Ammon and Moab threatened to crush Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat. God appointed a choir to head the army of his people and their job was to praise God in his holiness, and they stood up and belted it out and their enemies all slew each other, and the Israelites spent three days picking up the spoil.

What difference would it make to our singing if we thought of choirmasters, not as some sort of artists in residence, but as company commanders, who do not let us forget that singing is our weapon against the powers of darkness?

3. *Revival will result when people take as reality God's perspective on reality.*

We have to know what that is, and we have to hear the Word of the Lord, loud and clear. Declaring God's word against deplorable situations is mainly what is meant by prophesying in the Bible. Prophecy is not so much telling the future as telling forth the will of the Lord for our needy world. And Edwards noticed that in the OT the act of prophesying is often done through singing. Eg. *Exodus 15:20-21*, "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, **Sing** ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

What impact would it have on our singing if we sought to sing, not mere human words, but in the prophetic power of the Spirit of God?

4. *Singing is an anticipation of heaven.*

The new song is being sung by the glorious company in heaven. It is the principal employment of that assembly. With the melody of this song does heaven ring, as Rev 14:2, the verse before his text, indicated: 'And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder.' Our earthly choirs are prototypes of the heavenly choir which is the archetype.

How transformative might it be as you sing to reflect on the fact that your singing anticipates the heavenly glory and encourages God's faithful never to lose sight of Jesus until by his grace they shall look on his face. In the preface to his 1753 Collection of 181 Hymns, George Whitefield observed: 'we never resemble the Blessed Worshippers above more than when we are joining together in public Devotions, and with Hearts and Lips unfeigned, singing praises to him who sitteth upon the throne forever.'^[21]

5. Impressed as he was by his own congregation's ability to sing, and how elated he was by the thought that Spirit-filled choirs in this age prefigure the heavenly choir, he was adamant that *the celestial choir will be vastly superior to the terrestrial*.

In heaven there will be a far more lively expression of that harmony for which singing in divine worship is mainly responsible. Harmony is how Edwards understood beauty. Because he was convinced there would be an immensely superior expression of that harmony in heaven, he dared to speculate:

'tis probable that the glorified saints, after they have again received their bodies, the music they will then make will be in a medium capable of modulations in an infinitely more nice, exact and fine proportion than our gross air, and with organs as much more adapted to such proportions.^[22]

There has been much speculation on the nature of the resurrection body, but Edwards to my knowledge, has been the only theologian who has dared to suggest that the resurrected body will be especially equipped to sing more beautifully and to produce more harmonious sounds.

As you struggle now with your voice, just as you struggle to maintain every other part of your declining anatomy, take heart: you will in glory be singing higher notes than Joan Sutherland or the three tenors.

Never give up on singing the new song: it will refresh and revive the Lord's church and give the Lord much pleasure.

Stuart Piggin,
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^[1] Mark A. Noll, 'Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality', in Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (eds), *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 246.

^[2] Noll, 'Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality', 241.

^[3] Noll, 'Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality', 260.

[4] The following is based largely on Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History*, Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2018, pp.532-38, where we explore the intriguing possibility that the Welsh Revival began in Australia.

[5] W.T. Stead, *The Welsh Revival: A Narrative of Facts*, Melbourne: 'The Review of Reviews' Publishing Office, [1905], 30, 53f.

[6] Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 23.

[7] Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 24.

[8] Martyn Lloyd-Jones believed that the failure to keep preaching in the revival was lamentable. 'Foreword' to Eifeon Evans, *The Welsh Revival of 1904*, Bryntirion: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1987, 6.

[9] George T. Davis, *Twice around the World with Alexander*, New York: The Christian Herald, 1907, viii.

[10] Davis, *Twice around the World with Alexander*, 352.

[11] Davis, *Twice around the World with Alexander*, 41.

[12] Stead, *The Welsh Revival*, 78.

[13] Davis, *Twice around the World with Alexander*, 19, 23, 39, 139, 142.

[14] Davis, *Twice around the World with Alexander*, 141.

[15] I have put this into the first person. John R. Richardson, *An Interview with Jonathan Edwards*, no date or place, p. xivf.

[16] *Letters and Personal Writings*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 16, Edited by George S. Claghorn, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, 790.

[17] *The Great Awakening*. The Works of Jonathan Edwards 4. Edited by C. C. Goen, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 150f.

[18] Edwards's congregation sang only psalms in meter, which required considerable talent and effort for any melodic result. Not until 1742, in the middle of the Great Awakening, did they begin using Isaac Watts' hymns. But already by 1736 Edwards was holding what were known as 'singing meetings' of a type anticipatory of those held by Evan Roberts in the Welsh Revival. Edwards justified 'singing only' meetings on the basis of *Colossians* 3:16. 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.' He contended "That a public **singing** of God's praises is an ordinance instituted by Christ to be observed in the Christian church."

[19] *Religious Affections*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 2, Edited by John E. Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, 115.

[20] *Typological Writings*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 11, Edited by Wallace E. Anderson and Mason I. Lowance, Jr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, 252.

[21] Noll, 'Whitefield, Hymnody, and Evangelical Spirituality', 244.

[22] *The Miscellanies (Entry Nos. a-z, aa-zz, 1-500)*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 13, Edited by Thomas A. Schafer, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, 331.

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RSCM Choristers' Prayer

*Bless, O Lord, us Thy servants
who minister in Thy temple.
Grant that what we sing with our lips,
we may believe in our hearts,
and what we believe in our hearts,
we may show forth in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

COVID-19 STATEMENT

RSCM NSW Branch is committed to the principle that all people who participate in church music activities should be able to do so in safety and without compromising their physical or emotional wellbeing.

As well as being our God-given responsibility to those whom he has placed over us, in the interests of our health and safety during this time of COVID-19, your committee urges all members to follow strictly the requirements of the health authorities and also the guidance provided by our church leaders.

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