



Victoria Branch News – July 2025

From our Chairperson

The year is zooming by, and lots has been happening in church music as you will see from the various updates from our members.

Volunteer committees like ours work hard behind the scenes to keep our community informed and connected. I'd like to pay tribute to all the members of the committee who stood for election again at the AGM: Philip Nicolls, Fay Magee, Philip Matthias, Siegfried Franke and Michael Bottomley. Special thanks Leanne Earl and Marion Dewar for their work and contributions, we wish you well for the future. And welcome to the newest member of the committee, Victoria Hay.

Becky Llewellyn, who featured in a previous newsletter, reach out about an exciting new Psalm translation project being undertaken by Rev'd Matthew Anstey in Adelaide. You can find more about them at www.ansteypsalter.com, and attached is a setting composed by Becky as a bit of teaser. Thank you Becky!

Please do reach out to me with any ideas and feedback: my number is 0412 806 034 or you can email me at danielpbrace@gmail.com – I'd love to hear from you. Until next time, happy music making.

Welcome to new Members

A warm welcome to new members Ruth Williams, Zinaida Campion and Frank De Rosso.

Ruth, who is based around the Dividing Range region north of Melbourne, was responsible for the wonderful Welsh Choir and big sing called Kyneton Gymanfa in 2024. Here are some photos of the event from last year. Welcome Ruth, and keep up the great music making.



Zinaida Campion is a classical soprano based in Geelong. She has had a Windfire Vocal Scholarship with Music at the Basilica in Geelong since 2023, is a member of VOYCE (Victorian Opera). Zinaida regularly collaborates with Victoria Hay as the new classical duo, Cecilia's Daughters, who have been raising money for the restoration of St Thomas' Winchelsea and St George's Queenscliff. Zinaida sings with the occasional choir at St Paul's Geelong, and has worked with Trinity College Chapel Choir as well. Welcome Zinaida!

And it is a great pleasure to welcome Frank De Rosso OAM, Director of Music and Organist Basilica of St Mary of the Angels Geelong, Artistic Director of Music at the Basilica, Founder of Windfire Festival of Music. Frank received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2019 for 'services to music', and was, for many years, the head of music at St Joseph's College in Geelong.

Frank has taught, supported and nurtured music and countless musicians over many decades, and it's a great honour to have Frank join the Victoria Branch. Welcome Frank!



By Daniel Brace

4,000 join sung procession for Corpus Christi

This year was the first time the procession ventured into the heart of Melbourne's CBD, beginning at St Patrick's Cathedral then making its way towards Flinders Street and Federation Square, stopping traffic as thousands of pilgrims sang hymns of praise and walked with Christ present in the Eucharist.

Led by Bishop Martin Ashe, thousands of pilgrims streamed out of the Cathedral and prayerfully walked along Gisborne Street past Parliament House, Victoria's Old Treasury Building and down onto Flinders Street.

The walk was punctuated by various prayers led by local clergy and laity, including decades of the Rosary and various litanies, as well as traditional hymns such as '*Anima Christi*' and '*Ubi Caritas*' (from Taizé).

Bishop Ashe led the crowd in the final blessing and benediction, and as he lifted up the Blessed Sacrament, a reverent silence fell upon the usually bustling city space. Fittingly, that silence was interrupted only by the crowd's rapturous renditions of the hymns '*Salve Regina*' and '*How Great Thou Art*' led by St Patrick's Cathedral Schola.



Parts of this article including photographs reproduced with permission from the Archdiocese of Melbourne with thanks to Philip Matthias.

Hymns and Psalms on Creation and the Environment

On Sunday afternoon, 22 June 2025, the Uniting Church Vic/Tas Historical Society presented the fourth in a series of lectures/demonstrations about hymns and psalms - with enthusiastic audience participation. Led by Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood, an internationally recognised expert in the field of hymnody and liturgy and ably assisted by musicians Bruce Macrae, Colin Prohasky and an occasional choir, it recognised the growing interest within the churches in matters concerning the environment.

D'Arcy presented twenty hymns/psalms relevant to the topic, mostly from *Together in Song*, discussing their authors and composers ranging from the Thirteenth century to the Twenty-first. Some of the hymns were well-known but quite a few were new to most in the audience and will hopefully be given more attention in the future. TIS 668 *Touch the earth lightly* is a good example. Those congregations with children could consider TIS 176 *The sounds in God's world all agree*. That encourages participation and involvement, and it is not just for children.

About eighty souls braved the cold afternoon to enjoy the warm hospitality of Stonnington Community Church and many lingered over afternoon tea renewing acquaintances and discussing the interesting music.

Pictures - Bruce Macrae conducts (L) and Rev Dr D'Arcy Woods (R)



By Ken Barelli

Congratulations Georgie Palmer



Big congratulations to local composer Georgie Palmer for winning the inaugural RSCM Harold Smart Memorial Composition Competition for her work 'An upper room' which has been deemed 'fresh, innovative works that inspire and uplift, suitable for performance in a church setting.' It is lovely.

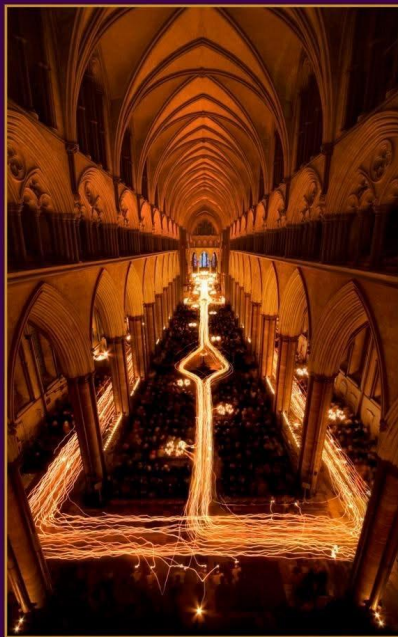
It was announced in CMQ and I have had the pleasure of meeting Georgie several times, and will be writing a feature article for the next edition of the newsletter.

Georgie is on a tour of Europe including a composition workshop in Vienna and a world premiere of one of her works in the UK. <https://www.georginapalmer.com/>

By Daniel Brace

ENCORE
publications

CAROLS AS WE WAIT



Photograph, Salisbury Cathedral, © Ash Mills Photography

Publishing in July 2025

CAROLS AS WE WAIT

Introsits, Hymns and Carols
for Advent

for mixed-voice choirs

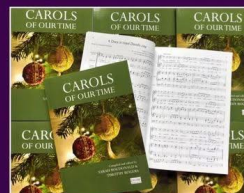
compiled and edited by Timothy Rogers

All of the music in this collection is composed by women including Esther Bersweden, Eleanor Daley, Sasha Johnson Manning, Sarah MacDonald, Jessica Macfarlane, June Nixon, Gail Randall, Ghislaine Reece-Trapp, Alice Rivers, Joy Williams and Alison Willis. The range of styles is distinctive and diverse with a mix of accompanied and unaccompanied works.

Carols As We Wait contains mostly original pieces, as well as some arrangements of traditional hymns and carols. The musical items are all newly composed and published for the first time. Sharon Grenham-Thompson has also written a new text for one of the carols. Overall, the words and music will refresh and enhance the season of Advent, providing rewarding repertoire for choirs.



Timothy Rogers is a music publisher and composer. He founded Encore Publications in 1992 and works as its Head of Publishing. He is also the author of a book, *Christmas Eve at King's, 100 Years of Nine Lessons & Carols*.



Also available from the publisher:

CAROLS OF OUR TIME

27 carols and hymn arrangements
by women composers, compiled and edited
by Sarah MacDonald & Timothy Rogers

First published by Encore Publications in 2023.

CAROLS AS WE WAIT

Catalogue number: 020834 ISMN: 979-0-9002530-1-9

Size: 270 x 190mm; Extent: 80 pages (vocal score)

Publication date: 14 July 2025; Retail selling price: (GBP) £9.95

Use the QR code opposite to find out more and to read preview pages.



From the Organ Stool – Michael Bottomley at Christ Church Castlemaine

The June Evensong was quickly upon us and of course the upcoming popular Jazz Mass (Will Todd's Missa Brevis) on the King's birthday weekend. I appreciate and am myself enthused by the choir enjoying the challenge of preparing and singing a range of music in varying styles.

Over the next few weeks it is planned to introduce a new Eucharist setting by Joanne Forbes L'Estrange which I'm sure will bring a new musical expression to our worship and that everyone will engage with.

There have been successful musical events over the past few months and some exciting concerts. Our Agitation Hill Chamber Music Series began on April 6th with Elyane Laussade presenting four of her students aged 14-16 – 'The Maestra and Her Prodigies'. They were brilliant! The girls played solos, duets and finished with a piece for 8 hands. It was spectacular.

The next chamber music concert was on May 11th. Elyane was joined by Luke Severn (cello) and Tasmanian Symphony player Miranda Carson for a beautiful concert of chamber music favourites which included Schubert's Piano Trio No.1. The final concert in this series is on Sunday September 21st.



Report of HymnFest in Daylesford May 2025

This event was developed as part of the Hope 25 project for the parish of Christ Church Daylesford. Members of the congregation were invited to submit their favourite hymns to make the list for singing on the day. A list of 12 well-known hymns emerged and these were then crafted into three groups exploring the theme of hope - hope in the God of Creation; songs which celebrate creation, use images of God's world; hope in Jesus who came to save us, the witness of Mary, and our response; hope expressed in songs of devotion, in prayer and praise.

An introduction for each hymn from Fay Magee focused on a range of possibilities, from significant information about its origins, its place in the history of our hymn-singing, the journey of translation in a hymn such as *Be thou my vision*, from the Scottish Psalter to the new forms of hymns post Vatican II.

Each section of the program was introduced with a modern version of three Psalms by Nan C Merril and read by members of the congregation.

The gathering of approximately 60 people sang enthusiastically to the excellent accompaniments of Beverley Phillips (from St Mary's North Melbourne) and John Tung Yep (Christ Church Castlemaine).

The Fincham organ was also an important focus, having recently been tuned and with the hope that it can be used more frequently.

Afternoon tea in the Stanbridge Hall featured not only fine treats but singing from the Castlemaine Solomon Islander Choir.



By Fay Magee

Choir Boy – reflections of Michael Bottomley

For what activity in the early 1960's did you train three times a week and perform twice on a weekend? Cycling ? tennis? - none of these. The answer -a chorister at Christ Church Castlemaine. Monday at 5pm, Thursdays 7- 8pm, Saturday mid morning then Sunday morning service and evensong at 7pm each Sunday!!!!

The choirmaster Keith Bottomley ran a strong training program where you had to reach certain standards of musicianship and churchmanship which meant you began as a probationer (light blue ribbon on your badge) a junior chorister (dark blue) and then a full chorister (red).

When I joined there were about 12 boys and even if I say so myself very accomplished musicians. It was a very rewarding experience singing a great range of music and also a wonderful time of social activity.

Social activity you ask – yes getting to rehearsal early so we could kick the footy or play rounders etc. and then on the first Friday of the month we had our games night.

This was rough and tough with poison ball, keepings off and indoor rounders to name a few followed by supper.

These nights weren't without incidents as injuries were incurred – usually blood noses or a window would be broken by a ball. The night finished with supper!!!

The big night was November 5 with a huge bonfire and firework activity you wouldn't dream, of undertaking these days!!

Our repertoire included much secular music which we the boy choristers sang at receptions and special community occasions.

The choristers special day was December 6th – St. Nicholas day patron saint of choristers. On this day for many years we would rehearse for evensong then have a special tea prepared by Mrs Thorsen, Mum and Miss Shaw.

We would then sing the service of evensong go back to the hall where we would sing a short concert of secular music, have presentations to the choristers and supper!!!!

Another special occasion was November 22nd St. Ceceila Day (patron saint of music) where the whole choir would sing Evensong on whatever day of the week

The choir also had the opportunity to sing with other choirs - there was the annual trip to St. Paul's Melbourne for the annual RSCM choir festival involving many choirs (over 200 singers) from across the state and then our local festival usually either in Bendigo or here in Castlemaine which involved the choirs of St. Pauls, All Saints, Maryborough and ourselves- about 100 singers.

Another initiative was the production of a monthly chorister magazine with articles, jokes, reports activities – all edited by Garry Robins a fine junior scholar.

I still have copies of the 'Christ Church Chorister'!!

Another opportunity some of us had was to attend the RSCM Summer camp for choristers at Queenscliff. I went twice – homesick the first time but a great experience with rehearsals twice a day, plenty of active recreation and singing services in St. Georges Queenscliff.

In 1964-65 there was an uprising amongst some of the choristers!!!! We wanted to go to footy training and play on a Saturday. Bud Thorsen – head chorister at the time, was the first to break ranks and off to footy he went -but he still maintained his place in the choir and did so for many years as did his father before him.

Our choirmaster recognized he needed to be versatile and flexible to keep a strong young soprano line and consequently five very talented girls joined the choir.

As you can imagine in the 60's and at our age this caused some friction/competition and games night did become willing as did the competition for best musical development!- led to a very capable youth choir!!

Of courses while this was going on there was singing with us very competent adult sopranos, altos, tenors and basses....Our choir would regularly number 20 of a Sunday.

But time moves on, young peoples' voices break other interests take hold, education opportunities or employment are abound and life takes a new road.....

Future thinking... from Daniel Brace

Reading through the newsletter and seeing what other folks are up to musically across all denominations gives me a great boost. With the season of creation coming up, D'Arcy's presentation has given me great hymn options; a great reminder from Michael to seek out the Jazz Mass and connect with the music school up the road from my church; Fay's report shows wonderful music making in a regional town, and the awesome procession for Corpus Christi just goes to show, it's not all about dwindling church numbers.

Our new members and committee member, Victoria, bring new energy and a focus on the regions, particularly in the south west; and we have a strong presence to the north of Melbourne, as evidenced by the work of Beverley, Fay and Michael. But I wonder what we can do more of, or differently, to support and encourage church music in your church, wherever that might be.

Traditionally, organisations like ours have relied on conferences and mass gatherings to inform, educate, and connect members. These days, travel costs are prohibitive, and time is harder to put aside, especially when you consider online and virtual options. Our newsletter and Facebook presence might have become by de facto our sole source of connection... Perhaps it's time to start a blog or internet page, or quarterly meetings in different places?

Our work as a committee needs to be guided by you, our membership and thanks to good stewardship of previous committees we have a solid base upon which to build.

At a recent committee meeting there was discussion about winding down the organization. At the moment, we pay most of our income to the UK and some to the RSCM National Committee to run the website etc. This money paid to the UK pays for CMQ and online access to a range of resources and education materials.

Is this a wise use of our resources and as a member, do you feel you are getting value for money, and what would you like to see us accomplish in the next 12-18 months?

To this end, I will be emailing a short survey and asking you to please consider and respond. All responses will be confidential and you're welcome to call me on 0412 806 034 or email at danielpbrace@gmail.com if you have any questions or prefer to chat about your ideas or thoughts on these matters.

Thanks to the current committee for firmly turning down the idea of folding the organization. There is huge support and real commitment to keep going and growing. Church music means a great deal to each of us, spiritually, emotionally and physically, as we know it does to you. If you feel you have energy and capacity, we'd welcome you to work with us, or to let us know we can support you and music in your church.

Best wishes, Daniel - this photo from the musical celebrations of Pentecost @St Peters Eastern Hill



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We hope you can join us for an afternoon of wonderful music, featuring , a well known violinist, pianist, singers and an emerging talent.

**Entry by donation \$30.
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The RSCM Victoria Music Resource Library &
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Daniel Brace

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To promote the study, worthy practice and
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To facilitate communication between church
musicians of all Christian denominations in
Australia.

To encourage the composition and publication of
church music in Australia.

To establish formal links with Christian
denominations and organisations within Australia.

To develop, promote and administer award or
certificate schemes at various levels, specifically
related to church music in Australia.

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