

CONTENTS

From the
Minister's Desk
(page 1)

Calendar of
events
(page 2)

Editorial
(page 2)

View from the
Organ Bench
(page 3)

Chairperson's
Report
(page 4)

'Thanksted'
(page 5)

Choral
Conductor's
Flow Chart
(page 6)

Poetry
(page 9)

Cartoon
(page 9)

Celebrating 60
years of Organ
Music at St
Stephen's
(page 10)

Pictures from
Hymnfest
Throughout



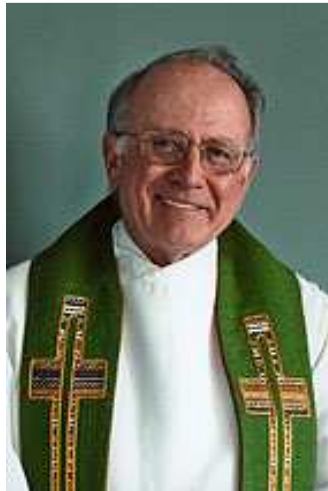
St Stephen's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, Sydney
office@ssms.org.au

VISION



Spring Edition 2010
Ph: (02) 9221 1688 Fax: (02) 9230 0316
www.ssms.org.au

LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS!



FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

"Whoever sings, prays twice". The words are attributed to Saint Augustine. Whether he really said them is uncertain, but if he didn't he should have.

We mortals are musical creatures. Music not only speaks powerfully to our hearts, it speaks eloquently *for* them. Good music adds depth to our worship, strength to our believing, credibility to our witness.

But note the adjective. Some hymns heard in churches today are not good at all. We're paying a price for the diminished use of well edited hymn books that give congregations access to the heritage of the ages. Shonky doctrine and poor poetry set to an inferior tune does nothing for the glory of God. It doesn't do much for the spiritual health of the church either. When Christians sing trivia they tend to believe that way too.

Fortunately that's not a problem at St Stephen's. Among the many strengths of this church is the consistently AAA+ standard of its music.

Thanks to gifted leaders, enthusiastic choristers, a superb organ, reasonable acoustics and a hymn book full of gems old and new, we not only hear great music, we get to sing it too. What happens on Sunday mornings is more than the organist and choir performing for you and me. It is all of us, together, with their expert help, doing our best to perform for God.

But take care. Relaxation is fatal to discipleship in general and worship in particular. We will keep trying, and we'll strive to make our best even better.

A large congregation, in mid-August, rattled the rafters with the Hymnfest. Each month we're learning to revel in the soaring simplicity of Michael Dudman's musical settings for Holy Communion. Every Sunday we're using the Psalms -- often said responsively, sometimes in one of the paraphrases still dear to formerly Presbyterian hearts, maybe soon in some of the other musical settings that now abound.

And already planning has started for Advent and Christmas at St Stephen's. That should be a musical feast to remember.

Yes, we'll keep trying.

St Augustine, I suspect, would approve.

David Gill

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

24th - Peter Guy (organ)
Former Director of Music,
St. Stephen's Uniting Church

October

1st – Friday Music -Alexander 'Ozzie' Nelson
(flute)

8th - Friday Music -Five Cities Brass Quintet

15th - Friday Music -Alex Moseley
(classical guitar)

20th - Handcraft group meets at Marjorie
Rowland's home.
Please see Bernice Stewart, Margaret
De La Garde or Margaret Warden to
organize lift.

22nd - Friday Music Adam Szabo (cello)

29th - Friday Music -
Rev. Dr Daniel Dries (organ)
former Director of Music,
St. Stephen's Uniting Church

31st - Reformation Sunday.
Preacher: The Rev. Ian Pearson

November

5th, 12th, 19th and 26th - Friday Music –
Conservatorium High School students.

7th - All Saints

14th - Remembrance Sunday, with
30th Battalion church parade

21st - Christ the King
Preacher: The Rev. Dr Margaret Yee

26th – Fellowship and Handcraft Street Stall

28th - First Sunday in Advent,
with the Kirkin' o' the Tartans

December

1st – Fellowship Christmas Party

3rd - Friday music- Richard pulley (violin)

10th – Raisa Dobrinsky (piano),
Gregory Elmoglou (cello)

EDITORIAL

Hymnfest

“If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die...” said the Bard
through his character, the lovesick Duke Orsino in
Twelfth Night.

After the Hymnfest in August, how about something more
positive ?

If music be the food of worship, play on! Sing on!
Give us an abundance of it that pure joy ascends like
prayer – an echo of the song sung at Creation or
fragments anticipated of the new song of heaven!
This edition reflects the effect, both serious and
humorous, of Music in general, and the Hymnfest in
particular.

Congratulations to our indefatigable Director of Music,
Mark Quarmby , to Anthony Pasquill, our energetic,
motivator/ conductor, and to David Tagg for his brilliant
and controlled accompaniment, in making the event a
delightful finale to the morning's Thanksgiving service and
the launch of the Conservation Trust.



Ruth Ponniah



VIEW FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

**MARK QUARMBY
(DIRECTOR OF MUSIC).**

What a view from the organ bench I beheld on Sunday afternoon, 15th August! What a sound I heard as the church was resonating with the voices of many people in song, accompanied by brass, timpani and organ! Having now been the Director of Music at St Stephen's for 12 months, surely this year's Hymn Fest was the highlight of my first year. It was wonderful to see so many people there and feel the electricity in the air from the wonderful singing of fine hymns which stir the soul.

I am so fortunate to have such a wonderful team of musicians at St Stephen's. Anthony Pasquill, at very short notice due to the sudden illness of Dr Gordon Stewart, took over the directing of the afternoon and did such a wonderful job! Who needs an international celebrity when we have Anthony?! David Tagg played so well that several professional church musicians in the audience who couldn't see the organ console, had no idea when I was playing and when David was playing! Our Hymn Fest has really put St Stephen's back on the map as a musical church to be reckoned with in Sydney. No longer does one need to go to a cathedral to hear fine church music!

The Five Cities Brass Quintet was joined by a timpanist to help accompany the hymns. What a fabulous sound that was, especially when the organ joined in. How many others experienced a feast of goose-bumps?

Anthony's other choir, Bel a Cappella, helped to lead the hymns and also provided some beautiful anthems. We were also fortunate to have some friends join our choir for the day. Let's hope that some of them may stay.

Have you ever thought of singing in our choir? If you can read music and enjoy singing, please speak with either Anthony or me. We would love to have you join us. We rehearse on Sundays at 9am and after the morning service. It is not a huge time commitment and we have lots of fun. We want to raise the standard and present more challenging works but until we have more singers in balanced parts, we can't do that.

For all those of you attended this year, please tell your friends and bring them along next year. Those of you who missed out this year, please make sure you put it in your diary as soon as we have worked out next year's date and don't miss out next time.

I would also like to publicly thank all those who helped with the day: all the ladies involved with the catering and the men who helped with the setting up for the afternoon.



Mark Quarmby

**THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (NSW)
ST STEPHENS MACQUARIE STREET SYDNEY
CONSERVATION APPEAL**

On August 15, 2010, after the morning service, the Conservation Appeal was launched by Mr. Jim Mein AM, past Moderator of the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church.

Mr. Robert Staas, Heritage Architect and Director of NBRS and Partners, gave a brief history of St. Stephen's. The Congregation dates back to 1842. The Congregation met at six different sites until 1935 when, due to the resumption of the church land in Philip Street the present church was opened in Macquarie Street.

Historically St. Stephen's Elders and Ministers have played a vital part in formulating the structure and governance of the Uniting Church Assembly and the NSW Synod.

Mr. Ian Carroll OAM, President of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), spoke about the work of the National Trust. He explained that St. Stephen's Church is a very important element in the Macquarie Street precinct. It is part of the trio of significant religious buildings, namely St. Stephen's, St. James' and St Mary's. The Trust fosters and promotes the maintenance of historic, heritage buildings. It also establishes tax deductible appeals for non-trust properties such as churches.

We look forward to donors supporting the Conservation Appeal for St. Stephen's. The estimated cost of all the necessary work is in the vicinity of two million dollars (\$2,000,000).

Please consider prayerfully how you might help us to continue the work to conserve St. Stephen's.

Bernice Stewart



The Rev. Dr David Gill and Mrs Bernice Stewart with
Mr Robert Staas, Mr Ian Carroll OAM and Mr Jim Mein AM

THANKSTED

O Anthony we thank you, we think you did so well
And sang according to your cue, St Stephens choir and Bel
For we can only wonder at the program notes you found,
The internet is great and makes all those words profound
We love the details that you told and hang on every word
But we must confess we were confused when 'control C' we heard

Lots of items that we all sing through, and our throats feel so dry
We're in awe of those brass players too, they sound so nice we cry
And Mark Quarmbly really sounds great, and he plays the organ well
He plays the hymns without abate, and nails the Leonard Bell
David Tagg takes over and is fine, and he can play along
While St Stephen's choir stands in a line, they sing a gospel song



And the congregation sings along, the hymns sound very nice
Anthony's conducting is not wrong, he's spot on and concise
And the afternoon is pleasant and Bel sings some songs to all
The timpanist beats up a storm and really has a ball
Afternoon tea is a sight to see and we eat all the cake
Conversation flows with wine and tea, and friends we all can make

So our thanks to all those organisers for this lovely day
All the fine St Stephens volunteers, and others we must say
That the hymns and organ solos and the brass accompaniment
And the choirs and timpani too and singing heaven sent
But it all comes down to one young man we really think is best
Anthony Pasquill, we're such a fan, thanks for a great Hymnfest

By Margaret Grove, soprano with Bel A Capella Choir (With apologies to Holst)

DOWNSIZING!

RESTRUCTURING!

INCREASING ORCHESTRAL EFFICIENCY

The following is a report by the operational auditor after a visit to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra concert on the first night of the Philips Masters Series.

For considerable periods, the four oboe players had nothing to do. The numbers should be reduced and the work spread more evenly over the whole of the concert, eliminating peaks of activity.

All the 12 first violins were playing identical notes; this seems unnecessary duplication. The staff of this section should be drastically cut. If a large volume of sound is required, it could be obtained by means of electronic amplifying apparatus.

Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demi-semi-quavers; this seems an excessive refinement. It is recommended that all notes should be rounded up to the nearest semi-quaver. If this were done, it would be possible to use trainees and lower grade operatives more extensively.

There seems to be too much repetition of some musical passages. Scores should be drastically pruned. No useful purpose is served by repeating on the Horns a passage which has already been handled by the strings. It is estimated that if all redundant passages were eliminated, the whole concert time of two hours could be reduced to twenty minutes, and there would be no need for an interval.

The orchestra administrator agrees generally with these recommendations; but expresses the opinion that there might be some falling off in box office receipts. In that unlikely event, it should be possible to close sections of the auditorium entirely, with a consequential saving in overhead expenses – lighting, attendants, ushers, program sellers, box office staff etc.

If the worst came to the worst, the whole thing could be abandoned and the public could go to the pictures instead.



Contributed by Wayne Koivu

MUSIC FAVOURITES

Music interests of a cross-section of the congregation

About 80% expressed an eclectic taste albeit, with a preference for classical and semi-classical music and traditional hymns.

- Florence - never misses the Sydney Piano competition and a performance of Handel's "Messiah" at Christmas. Finds all music uplifting, especially the music in Nature
- Richard – Traditional hymns. Favourite – "Finlandia" for music and words.
- Barbara - Elgar's Cello Concerto, ergo, favourite instrument –cello. New interest – Opera. Favourite hymn – "Amazing Grace".
- Robert H – Syncretic passion for music. Favourite hymn –"Dear Lord and Father of all Mankind"; George Beverley Shae's rendition of "He's got the whole world in His hands"; Parry's "I was glad when they said ... ". Words have the greater appeal to the melody.
- Margaret de La G – eclectic. Chooses a variety of concerts. Subscribes to the Australian ballet
- Bill R – Doesn't *need* music all the time. Likes to attend classical music concerts.
- Jan D – Subscribes to the SSO. Regularly attends concerts at St. James' and Friday Music at St. Stephen's.
- Alex & Margaret N – Words take precedence over tune, especially in more modern ones, "Kneels at the feet of his friend and "Community of Christ". Old favourites are "Forth in thy name O Lord we go" and "Come down O Love divine" Favourite composers: Henry Purcell and Vaughan Williams. Also love the bagpipes playing "Highland Cathedral".
- Eric R – Called his taste "whimsical" and mood-music, but leans towards the classics. Likes to sing in canon as the choir has done many times recently.
- Helen G – Classical. Favourite - Schubert's 9th. Favourite vocalists – Kathleen Ferrier, Luciano Pavaroti.
- Bernice S – Her Welsh heritage cannot think of anything better than "Guide e O Thou great Jehovah".
- George S – Sung psalms, especially those of David.
- Rosalie R – Favourite instruments: organ, piano, strings; Liszt's music ; oratorios in general; Scottish and other ethnic music.
- Michael S – "How lovely is Thy dwelling place ..." from Brahms' German Requiem. Favourite hymn – "O, sacred head".
- Joan R – Traditional hymns; classical music.
- Jack W – Jazz, with preference for Dixieland. Favourite artistes: Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Louis Armstrong. Favourite instrument – piano and clarinet.
- Sheena W – Multiform. Favourite hymn – "O for a thousand tongues" which she wants sung at her funeral!
- Eve W – No particular favourite. Perhaps, Bach's "Goldberg Variations" and the final 'Amen' chorus in Handel's "Messiah".

THE ALTO'S LAMENT

*Discovered behind the vestry door of All Saints Church,
Four Oaks, Sutton.*

It's tough to be an alto when you're singing in the choir
The sopranos get the twiddly bits that people all admire
The basses boom like loud trombones,
The tenors shout with glee,
But the alto part is on two notes – or if you're lucky –
three.

And when we sing an anthem and we lift our hearts in
praises
The men get all the juicy bits and telling little phrases.
Of course the trebles sing the tune – they always come
off best,
The altos only get three notes and twenty-two bars rest.

Oh! Shed a tear for altos, they're martyrs and they know.
In the ranks of choral singers they're considered
very low.
They are so very 'umble that a lot of folk forget 'em:
How they'd love to be sopranos,
But their vocal chords won't let 'em.

And when the final trumpet sounds and we are
wafted higher,
Sopranos, basses, tenors – they'll be in the
Heavenly Choir.
While they sing "Alleluia" to celestial flats and sharps.
The altos will be occupied with polishing the harps.

Contributed by Don Harvey

CARTOON



By Marion Welch

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF ORGAN MUSIC

On Saturday 14th August, the Organ Society of Australia held its 60th anniversary meeting and dinner at St Stephen's. The society was actually formed at St Stephen's all those years ago and the members were keen to return to the place of its formation. A group of volunteers working with Margaret Horscroft managed the venue and catered for the 60 attendees on the night.

The society was delighted with the event and apart from a few "challenges", the catering team produced a great result. Although being tired at the end of the evening, the team was enthusiastic saying "we could do that again and get better at it".

The income from the evening will go towards the upkeep of the organ. This is one of the initiatives being assessed for feasibility as a regular source of much-needed income for St Stephen's. We already have a second booking, so if you feel you would like to support this initiative or participate in it, please contact Margaret for more details.

Geoff Allan



ERRATUM

In Margaret Warden's piece on her association with St. Stephen's and her Report on the Fellowship the following points in the abridged form have been corrected by her:

The Ferguson Hall was not named in memory of Rev. John Ferguson **and** Bessie Ferguson but solely after the **Rev. John** Ferguson.

Apologies for the error

PILGRIMAGES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

An observation by the Rev. Gill in the last issue of *Vision*, about the revival of interest in pilgrimages sparked my curiosity. I found out about religious pilgrimages of the middle Ages and those which take place to-day.

It was not until the 9th century with the discovery of the relics of St. James in Compostela, Spain that European Christian pilgrimages really began.

During recent years, there has been an extraordinary revival of interest in travelling to holy sites, in particular, to Santiago de Compostela, usually on foot, over weeks and even months. Some people take part because it offers them time for reflection; others wish to visit cathedrals and other sites of religious significance along the way. Some walk alone, but most travel in a group. They come to experience a genuine sense of belonging. Thus, the shared experiences of a pilgrimage can be profoundly moving. Most people find themselves changed in some significant way when they return home.

In this issue of *Vision*, we are focusing on music and hymn singing. As pilgrims in the middle ages travelled long distances to reach a particular holy place, did they sing sacred songs to keep them motivated? And what about today's pilgrims who visit Santiago de Compostela? Surely, they too find themselves singing some of the hymns we know and love so well as they seek to find a deeper spiritual meaning and purpose in their lives.

Janice Dawson

THE REV. DR PAUL LOGAN

Morning tea on Sunday, 29 August was marked by a special fellowship and morning tea to celebrate the 2-months relief preaching provided by Rev. Dr Paul Logan. He had retired from St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, North Sydney. He had also been the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and was awarded the Order of Australia for his services in the Church, particularly in the area of Aged Care.

In his remarks we learnt how this short service term with us had renewed a number of personal acquaintanceships with some of our regular worshippers for him and his wife. They both look forward to their retirement marked by moving into their new home on the central coast.

Thank you, Paul, for giving us your time, and we wish you and Margaret God's blessings.

Bill Roberts

Chairperson, St Stephen's congregation



NATURE'S MELODY

Hark, my soul, how everything
Strives to serve our bounteous King;
Each a double tribute pays;
Sings its part, and then obeys.

Nature's sweet and chiefest quire
Him with cheerful notes admire;
Chanting every day their lauds,
While the grove their song applauds.

Though their voices lower be,
Streams have too their melody;
Night and day they warbling run,
Never pause, but still sing on.

All the flowers that gild the spring,
Hither their still music bring;
If Heaven bless them, thankful they
Smell more sweet, and look more gay.

Only we can scarce afford
This short office to our Lord;
We, -on whom his bounty flows,
All things gives, and nothing owes.

Wake, for shame, my sluggish heart,
Wake, and gladly sing thy part:
Learn of birds, and springs, and flowers,
How to use thy noble powers.

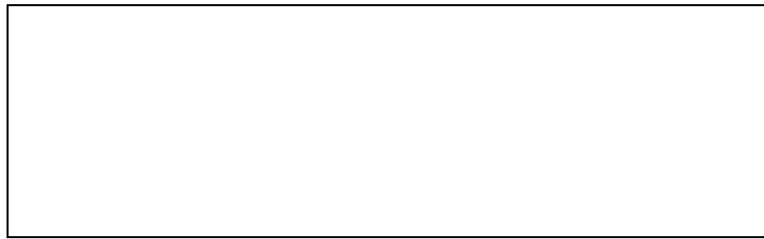
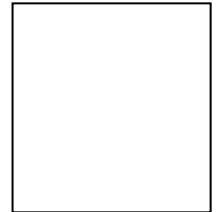
Call whole nature to thy aid,
Since 'twas he whole nature made;
Join in one eternal song,
Who to one God all belong.

Live for ever, glorious Lord,
Live, by all thy works adored;
One in three, and three in one,
Thrice we bow to thee alone.

John Austin (1613 - 69)



If not claimed please return to:
St Stephen's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 2000



The Editor "VISION"
St. Stephen's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, SYDNEY, NSW 2000

I do not wish to continue receiving Vision

Enclosed is my contribution of _____ towards production and/or postage of VISION
(address your cheque to St Stephen's Uniting Church)

I would prefer to receive VISION by email – my email address is

Please note my change of address

Name _____

Address _____
