

# THE SHARP EDGE

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September 2013



Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir and Orchestra Wellington, Wellington Town Hall, 2 June 2013

PHOTO: MATT GRACE

## Glorious Town Hall

Built at the very end of the Victorian era, Wellington Town Hall was the principal concert venue of the city until the Michael Fowler Centre's construction in 1983. Now it is to close for earthquake strengthening work.

The office of the Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust is located in Wellington's CBD, in the thick of the worst affected area during the recent seismic activity. Luckily, Central House in Brandon Street came through the earthquake relatively undamaged in comparison with some of its near neighbours. In the Choirs office there were seven cracked windows, files dislodged, and pictures sent askew, but the proud collection of trophies, won in competitions all around the world, were well secured and remained completely unmoved!

These latest strong shakes have been a wakeup call for Wellingtonians and many home emergency supplies have been hurriedly refurbished as a result. One step ahead of us was Wellington City Council, who had already decided that Wellington Town Hall would close in July 2013 for up to two years for earthquake strengthening.

The Wellington Town Hall's foundation stone was laid in 1901 and the building officially opened on 7 December 1904. It was originally fronted with a Roman-styled portico and a 150-foot clock tower. But earthquakes seem

to have plagued the Town Hall's history and the tower, main portico, pediment, balustrade, parapet and bold cornice were removed in 1934 as a precaution following the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake. The building was earthquake-strengthened in 1943 following an earthquake the previous year.

Many of the capital's concert presenters must find alternative accommodation and, in some ways, choirs are the hardest hit since the Town Hall is the most suitable venue for choral concerts. Voices New Zealand said its farewell with the *Messiah* performance with Orchestra Wellington in the Town Hall a month before its closure. The Victorian 'shoe box' shape was ideal for the blend of Handel's Baroque creation in Mozart's Classical arrangement. John Button remarked in the *Dominion Post*, "The sound in the Wellington Town Hall was glorious... Fortunately, this performance allowed us to hear Mozart's version in the best possible light."

With the hope that making the building safe does not affect the 'glorious' acoustic, we look forward to the venue's return in 2015.

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*The Sharp Edge* now available via email

### Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board

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# A new venue for Christchurch

The long awaited Christchurch Transitional Cathedral opened its doors early in August, with a 10 day Festival appropriately named “Joyfully Un-munted”.

This Festival celebrated the architectural beauty and acoustic potential of Christchurch’s newest space, and performances included classical, jazz, choral, organ recitals, barbershop, kapahaka and “Shakespeare and Friends” presented by the Court Theatre.

These concerts were enthusiastically supported, with at least 4500 people through the doors over the 10 days.

The innovative triangular building was designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, as a temporary cathedral for the Anglican Diocese, with the ceiling being partly built of large cardboard tubes, covering timber beams.

Christchurch Cathedral Director of Music, Brian Law, felt the space worked extremely



PHOTO: BRIDGET ANDERSON

well, and it was going to be a very good concert venue with excellent acoustics.

The New Zealand Youth Choir’s last appearance in the city was in collaboration with the National Youth Orchestra for a

performance in 2012 of Tippett’s *A Child of Our Time*. In September 2014 the choir will return to Christchurch to give a concert in the Transitional Cathedral following a week-long residency in Dunedin.



## RACHAEL CLARKE Communication Administrator

Rachael Clarke is new to Choirs Aotearoa NZ, joining the team in March 2013 as the Communications Administrator. Her responsibilities include dealing with all social media, data management and website maintenance, growth areas in the arts community.

Originally from Mount Maunganui, Rachael came to Wellington in 2009 to commence her studies at Victoria University. In 2012, she graduated with a BA in Media Studies and decided to begin her six month OE in South America.

After travelling to Peru, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia, Rachael returned to Wellington and started her role at Choirs Aotearoa NZ. With an early enthusiasm for writing that was realised in High School, Rachael is excited to now be using her passion and her degree at Choirs Aotearoa NZ.

## NEW PAGES

With only 90 ‘sleeps’ to go before the New Zealand Youth Choir jets off on its tour of the USA and Canada, a new tour section has opened up on the Choirs Aotearoa website.

**Getting Involved** invites you to get involved in this adventure and push our **Kilometre Barometer** all the way from Toronto to Washington, see what this is all about at:

[www.choirsnz.co.nz/usa-canada-2013/get-involved](http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/usa-canada-2013/get-involved)

**City Sponsorship** for companies, individuals and fan groups will twin a tour city to your city or place of business in North America. Details are at:

[www.choirsnz.co.nz/2013-usa-canada-city-sponsorships](http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/2013-usa-canada-city-sponsorships)

Chief Executive, Roger Lloyd will be happy to discuss this with you. Tel: (04) 499 0692  
Email [choirs@choirsnz.co.nz](mailto:choirs@choirsnz.co.nz)

**NZYC Alumni** can share their Youth Choir Highlights at

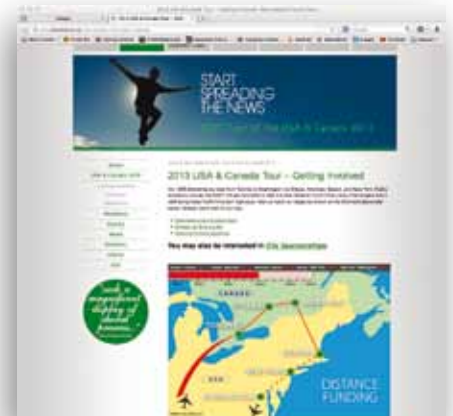
[www.choirsnz.co.nz/nzyc-alumni-tour-highlights](http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/nzyc-alumni-tour-highlights) and relive their NZYC experience.

COMING SOON a **Tour Blog** and **Tour Gallery**. **It’s all go at Choirs!**

## JOIN THE TOUR

There are a limited number of spare seats available on the two luxury tour coaches on the NZ Youth Choir’s road trip from Toronto to Washington. These are on offer for the cost recovery price of NZ\$450\* for the 1,866 km journey – by far the cheapest way to follow the choir. For more information contact Emma on tel: (04) 499 0692, email: [choirs@choirsnz.co.nz](mailto:choirs@choirsnz.co.nz)

\*NB Price does not include accommodation, meals and flights to North America.





## HAVE A GOOD TIME

*Message from the Chief Executive, Roger Lloyd*

“Have a good time,” people said to me as I left on my *recce* trip for the NZ Youth Choir’s tour to the USA & Canada at the end of this year. As a veteran of these kinds of expeditions, I knew ‘a good time’ was unlikely to be on the agenda, particularly as I had scheduled myself an economical, 8-cities-in-10-days dash from coast to coast in North America.

These fact-finding missions are more physically punishing than the tour itself, as the tour party is usually resident in each centre for two or three days. A *recce* is mainly a box-ticking exercise taking just a few hours in each place. Principally I had to ensure that the accommodation was as presented on its website and could provide what it promised. Checking-out the locality of the nearest ATMs, restaurants and public transport is a must.

To do this I was *made* to stay in each city’s inexpensive youth hostels, etc. that had been identified by my colleague, Emma. Don’t get me wrong, in my youth I was a proud, badge-wearing member of the Youth Hostel Association. But being the oldest person in a building by some 30 years is a little wearing and the yearning for the comforts of home is strong. Happily, there was only one dud on the whole trip, a ‘budget’ hotel in New York. The general seediness of the establishment coupled with warnings from Reception about pilfering made it a simple decision. After an uncomfortable night, I left very early to find an alternative for the tour party. The best hostel was in Montréal with its European feel and *joie de vivre*. Not surprising as after Paris, Montréal is the largest French-speaking city in the world!

Without exception, the performance venues were great – from the spectacular modern concert halls in Orange County and Los Angeles through to the jaw-dropping Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. The churches in each centre are ideal for our recital tour and all have strong musical traditions. Similarly, the people involved in presenting our performances were helpful and friendly. I am confident the NZ Youth Choir will ‘have a good time’ in North America and perform to the very high standards we have come to expect.

• For more information about the NZYC Tour to the USA & Canada 2013 go to:

[www.choirsnz.co.nz/usa-canada-2013](http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/usa-canada-2013)



*New Zealand Youth Choir and David Squire, Banquet Hall, Parliament.*

## Parliamentary Gallery

On 2 July the New Zealand Youth Choir gave a short concert in Parliament for MPs, professional colleagues and corporate guests followed by a ‘meet the artists’ reception. The event was hosted by the Hon Nikki Kaye, Minister of Youth Affairs.



*Cameron Gray, Karen Grylls and the Hon Nikki Kaye.*

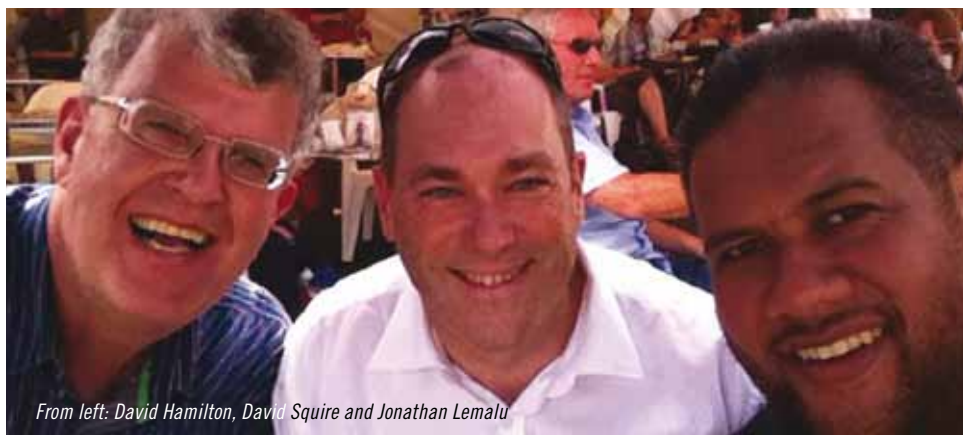


*From left: Trevor Kempton, Chair, Choirs Aotearoa and Stephen Wainwright, Chief Executive, Creative New Zealand; Chelsea Numanga, Dilys Fong, Alex Sinclair and Dr Kennedy Graham MP.*



*From left: Tim Carpenter, Simon Anderson, Jared Corbett and Tim Macindoe MP; Grace Neale, Juliette Irwin and Ella Smith*

PHOTOS: IMMIT GRACE



From left: David Hamilton, David Squire and Jonathan Lemalu

# Llangollen 2013

Composer, choral director, NZ Youth Choir Alumnus, adjudicator and Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trustee David Hamilton reports on his impressions of the World's most famous choral competition.

In early July this year, I found myself back in Llangollen as an adjudicator for the second year running for the International Musical Eisteddfod. After a week of wet weather the previous year, Britain now turned on sunny days to the point where the term 'heatwave' was being regularly used.

Llangollen draws crowds to both the daytime competitive events, and the evening concerts. The Eisteddfod takes over the town for a week, beginning with a colourful parade, and ending with the 'Choir of the World' Competition. For me, there was the added interest this year of Euphony from Kristen School

(conducted by David Squire) competing in two categories, and including some of my works in their tour and competition programmes. The youngest group in that section, they gained third place in the Female Choirs category. They also performed creditably in the Senior Children's Choirs section – probably the most intensely fought category, which was won for the second successive year by Cantabile from England, a very fine girls' choir.

Llangollen is not just about choirs. There are solo vocal and instrumental competitions, and folk music and dance. In addition to my duties as a

choral adjudicator, I was involved with the Cultural Showcase category. This required the groups to present an integrated programme of song, dance, instrumental, and choral music. It was won by an Indian group who presented a wedding ceremony; second place was taken by a delightful performance of French-Canadian music by the Saskatoon Children's Choir from Canada.

There was also a New Zealand connection in the evening concerts when Jonathan Lemalu appeared as one of the soloists in a performance of the Verdi *Requiem*.

Five choirs competed for the title of 'Choir of the World' coming from Wales, the Czech Republic, Russia, Spain, and Australia. In this high profile tournament the importance of repertoire choice was evident. For some of the choirs' programmes, where fine performances were given earlier in the contest, certain items were replaced with music that did not show them off as well. This year's champions were the Adelaide Chamber Singers conducted by Carl Crossin. This choir showed an ability to handle different genres with ease, and convinced with a finely nuanced and diverse programme. It was an occasion where a New Zealander could take pride in our Aussie cousins' achievement!



Adelaide Chamber Singers



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PO Box 11 046, Wellington 6142 or see our website**

[www.choirsnz.co.nz](http://www.choirsnz.co.nz)

**Thank you for your support!**

