

THE SHARP EDGE

Registered Charitable Trust No CC21921

April 2012



Peter Godfrey celebrates his 90th birthday with a rehearsal and party



PHOTOS: HOWARD CHAMBERLAIN

Godfrey at 90

Peter Godfrey, doyen of New Zealand choral directors and former Music Director of the National Youth Choir, celebrated his 90th birthday on 3 April by taking a rehearsal with St. Michael's Anglican Church Choir in Waikanae.

WHY SUBSCRIBE

In last November's The Sharp Edge we announced that this newsletter was going 'digital' and would only be free online. For patrons who prefer to read from paper you can Subscribe (\$25 per annum & NZYC alumni \$20 per annum) please contact us via www.choirsnz.co.nz/contact-us or choirs@choirsnz.co.nz or ring 04 499 0692.

If you know a Choirs supporter who is not on email, please let them know about this service.

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Peter Godfrey, a farmer's son, was born in 1922 in Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire, in the Fen district of Eastern England. Encouraged by a musical mother, at the age of nine he became a chorister in the King's College Chapel Choir, Cambridge, and later returned to Kings as a bass choral scholar. After completing his BMus degree in 1942 he was called up and served as a Captain in the King's African Rifles in East Africa and Ceylon.

In 1945 he married Sheila McNeile in his local village church where her father was Rector. At the end of the war he returned to Cambridge to complete his BA and qualified for an MA. There he shared rooms with David Willcocks, a fellow choral traveller. Peter attended the Royal College of Music for a year studying piano, organ and singing and, after a number of teaching jobs, was appointed Assistant Director of Music at Marlborough College in Wiltshire. Although keen to move overseas, a promotion to Director of Music at Marlborough kept the Godfreys in England for a few more years.

With the help of NZ ex-pat Malcolm Rickard, Godfrey moved to New Zealand in 1958 and took up posts as Lecturer in Music at Auckland University and organist at the Anglican Cathedral. He also became conductor of the Auckland String Players which later developed into the Symphonia of Auckland. His activities expanded to include directing the Dorian

Choir (1961-83), Auckland University Singers (1970-82), and the Auckland University Choral Society (1968-82). These groups toured internationally and won prestigious overseas competitions. He was appointed Professor of Music at the University of Auckland in 1974.

In 1972 Godfrey was asked to form a choir to represent New Zealand at the Universities' Choral Festival in New York in 1972 followed by a visit England and the Netherlands. In 1974 the choir sang in Perth and other Australian cities. It is not surprising that in the early 1980s, when Guy Jansen was promoting his idea of forming a National Youth Choir, he asked for Peter Godfrey's help with this project.

In 1978 Godfrey was invited back to Cambridge as Acting Director of Music/Choir of King's College Chapel for six months. With this appointment, he achieved the distinction of being the only person since the 15th century to have been a chorister, choral scholar, and Head of Music at Kings College Cambridge.

When he was invited to become Director of Music of Wellington Cathedral in 1982, he moved to Waikanae on the Kapiti Coast, which he chose as the best place to pursue his other great love, gardening. He and his wife found a small house with a large garden and over time they made

GODFREY AT 90 CONTINUED.

additions to the property. Sadly, Sheila died in 1993; subsequently Godfrey married piano teacher, Jane Barnett.

In 1984, when Malcolm Rickard retired, Godfrey was offered the directorship of the Orpheus Choir, an association that lasted until 1991. In 1985 he founded the New Zealand Choral Federation and to this day remains the organisation's Patron. From 1992 he was Director of the Kapiti Chamber Choir and of the 100-member Kapiti Chorale. He also became conductor at St Michael's Church Choir, Waikanae, a post he still holds. In recognition of his contribution to music, Peter Godfrey was made an MBE in 1978, a CBE in 1988, and Professor Emeritus of the University of Auckland in 1982. He received an Arts Foundation Icon Award in 2005.

National Youth Choir

When he moved to the Wellington region, Peter Godfrey was already Guest Conductor of the National (NZ) Youth Choir and in 1983 he became the choir's Music Director. During his tenure they toured extensively, winning success at the European Broadcasting Union's 'Let the Peoples Sing' (1986), and two years later visited the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales, Salzburg and Vienna, where they won the prize for Best Choir at the International Festival for Youth and Music. After the 1988 tour it was announced that Peter Godfrey was handing on the Music Director baton to Karen Grylls.

'Conducting the National Youth Choir was certainly the most inspiring opportunity I have ever been given. Skill, artistry and enthusiasm were unique features of this choir from the outset, and will never be forgotten'

Peter Godfrey, NZ NYC 20th Anniversary Magazine, May 1999

Biographical sources: Arts Foundation, SOUNZ, IRMT Ritmico



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GODFREY FAMILY



James Tibbles

Assistant Music Director, New Zealand Youth Choir

James Tibbles is one of New Zealand's leading exponents of historic keyboard instruments and the founder/director of the early music chamber choir Cantus Firmus, which specialises in historically-aware performance of Renaissance and Baroque sacred choral repertoire. He is a member of the period instrument ensemble Extempore, which has established a fine reputation both in NZ and abroad for its vibrant performances of 18th-century chamber music.

He is Associate Head, Performance and Senior Lecturer in Early Music in the School of Music at the University of Auckland. In addition to his wide research interests he has made a number of CD recordings, including 'And I saw in a New Heaven' with the Auckland Cathedral Singers, 'Sesquialtera' a selection of 18th-century organ music, J S Bach 'In the Italian Style' for solo harpsichord, and a disc of North German organ music from the late 17th-century period.

James Tibbles has been Assistant Music Director of the New Zealand Youth Choir since 2003 regularly working with the choir in New Zealand and on many overseas tours.

Mozart Requiem

by candlelight

Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir and Vector Wellington Orchestra
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Requiem Mass in D minor K626*

Karyn Grylls *conductor*

Morag Atchison *soprano*, Bianca Andrew *mezzo soprano*

Bonaventure Allan-Moetaua *tenor*, Shane Lawrence *bass*

The intrigue surrounding the composition of Mozart's Requiem is almost as far-fetched as Peter Shaffer's famous play, 'Amadeus'. In reality, the Requiem was secretly commissioned by the wealthy nobleman, Count Franz von *Walsegg*, to commemorate the anniversary of his wife's death. It is also thought that the Count intended to pass off the work as his own – hence the secrecy.

At the time of his death, Mozart was heavily in debt and, as the composer had only received half of the payment in advance, his young widow Constanze set about securing the family's future by completing the commission in order to claim the rest of the

fee. Mozart's pupil, the 21-year-old Franz Süssmayr, eventually took up the task and, with the help of other composers, added the *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, *Agnus Dei* and the final section, *Lux aeterna*, based on Mozart's own sketches.

When Mozart died in the middle of the night on 5 December, 1791 his long-time friend and patron Gottfried van Swieten arrived and made all the funeral arrangements. He is thought to have supported the Mozart family as Constanze's correspondence mentions his "generosity". On 2 January 1793 he sponsored a performance of Mozart's Requiem as a benefit concert for Constanze which showed a profit of

300 ducats, a substantial sum.

In the last 200 years, there have been several attempts at alternative completions but it is the Süssmayr version that is the most familiar and the one used in this performance.

Wednesday 6 June 2012 at 7.30pm
St Paul's Cathedral, Wellington

Pre-concert Talk by Peter Walls at 6.30pm
Admission free to ticket holders

Tickets from Ticketek (service fee will apply)
Tel: 0800 TICKETEK (842 538) www.ticketek.co.nz
Door sales: cash only





HIGHLY VALUED GIFTS

Message from the Chief Executive
Roger Lloyd

The current global financial crisis is considered by many economists to be the worst financial calamity since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Although isolated geographically, New Zealand has not escaped entirely from the collapse of large and revered financial institutions of the Northern Hemisphere. People and companies in NZ are being very cautious in how they spend their money.

The arts sector is a fragile plant and any change in the financial climate is amplified in effect where operating margins are thin and reserves meagre. In 2011 we also had the Christchurch earthquake, a national tragedy and a responsibility to be shared by all. Many of the grants we receive from trusts and foundations quickly dry up when an unexpected catastrophe, such as in Christchurch, requires money urgently.

Despite the dedicated efforts of trustees and management in actively pursuing corporate funding, these trends have had a significant impact on our operation. To keep afloat we have had to cut back our administrative support considerably. So far we have been able to protect the choirs' musical output and we hope the ever increasing use of new technology – social networking, electronic mail, etc., will help maintain services to the public and the choirs.

Choirs Aotearoa has major supporters such as Creative NZ and the NZ Community Trust, but the personal donations from lovers of choral music are highly valued gifts which we greatly appreciate. We have endeavoured to make donating simple: you can use the form on the back page or visit www.choirsnz.co.nz/donate

We need support from the New Zealand community in order to maintain these two national choirs. Please help us do that.

A REALLY BIG SING

On April 29, the Vector Wellington Orchestra and Orpheus Choir will perform Beethoven's monumental *Missa Solemnis*.



Soloists (L-R): Cameron Barclay, Bianca Andrew, Emma Fraser and Kieran Rayner

The *Missa Solemnis* stands alongside the Bach B Minor Mass as one of the pinnacles of Western sacred music. It took Beethoven, then at the height of his powers, four years to write. He said that out of all his works, this was the one closest to his heart.

VWO music director, Marc Taddei, says it is a deeply personal work to Beethoven. "So much so that he delayed the composition of his great Ninth Symphony to finish this, in terrible circumstances, including total deafness," Taddei says.

The Latin text of the Solemn Mass demands music that can convey joy, strength, fear, awe, suffering, pity, redemption, mercy, and forgiveness. Beethoven created an incredible range of music, whose constantly shifting textures and harmonies support the words with powerfully emotional force.

The solo vocal parts will be performed by four fresh young talents on New Zealand's opera scene. Soprano **Emma Fraser**, mezzo soprano **Bianca Andrew**, tenor Cameron Barclay and baritone **Kieran Rayner** are friends who have performed together and separately in some of Wellington's most innovative and talked-about productions. They've starred in Days Bay Opera's *Marriage of Figaro*, *Alcina* and *The Voyage to Rheims*, and the stunning New Zealand School of Music production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Beethoven envisaged his soloists as a quartet of equals working as a unit. "I really like that sound, as the melodies of the four vocal soloists intertwine," Kieran Rayner says. He describes the *Missa Solemnis* as an uplifting work, "It's a Solemn Mass. But it feels a lot more joyful than I expected. There are lots of uplifting parts, and it's very beautiful."

The concert opens with a short, elegiac work by **John Psathas** called *Luminous*.

Vector Wellington Orchestra presents **Missa Solemnis**
Sunday 29 April, Wellington Town Hall 4.00 pm

Free pre-concert talk by Marc Taddei at 3pm

Tickets from Ticketek (service fee will apply) Tel: 0800 TICKETEK (842 538) www.ticketek.co.nz

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A picture is worth a thousand words...

Some moments from the NZ Youth Choirs Hastings residency at Lindisfarne College.



It's better to give

Crowdfunding, a phenomenon coming out of the USA, has been developing over the last four years. The leading crowdfunding website in the States, www.kickstarter.com estimates it will raise USD\$150million for projects this year, \$6 million more than will be distributed by US National Endowment for the Arts.

There are two local crowdfunding sites aimed at the creative sector; www.pledgeme.co.nz the first New Zealand platform states that it 'provides a collaborative way to help fund creative projects'. The latest on the scene and developing its website is the one run by the Arts Foundation. On the current site www.boosted.org.nz, it claims this to be the first major initiative to fund the arts in decades.

To date, schemes worldwide seem to be mainly used by young artists and fledgling companies seeking relatively small amounts. But an exception to the rule was New Zealand film maker Taika Waititi who raised over \$100,000 to distribute his film *Boy* in the USA. Not surprising then that Arts Foundation Executive Director Simon Bowden says it is "opening its doors to all arts projects, from the grass roots to New Zealand's most established companies and artists".

Crowdfunding, a child of email and social media networking, would seem to have the potential to fundamentally change arts funding. But not all crowdfunding schemes are the same and donors may want to read the small print carefully before making their pledges.

Another option for individuals making charitable donations is **Payroll Giving**. Provided your employer files its EMS (IR348) and EDF (IR345) forms electronically, and if they are happy to participate, an employee can make donations directly from their pay with the tax rebate already credited. In other words if you decide to contribute \$30 a month to your chosen charity, only \$20 of it will be deducted from your pay. This avoids the annual filing of a claim and spreads the donation.

For more Information about Payroll Giving go to www.payrollgivinginfo.org.nz

We need hardly add that Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust is an IRD-approved donee organisation For Payroll Giving. To make a contribution see www.choirsnz.co.nz/donate for more details.

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www.choirsnz.co.nz

Thank you for your support!