

THE SHARP EDGE

Registered Charitable Trust No CC21921

May 2016



Pardubice, East Bohemia

From Bohemia's Woods and Fields

On its upcoming international tour, the New Zealand Youth Choir will perform in the International Festival of Academic Choirs in the Czech Republic.

This will not be the NZ Youth Choir's first visit to the Czech Republic, or 'Czechia' as it has started calling itself. En route to its famous 'Choir of the World' win at the International Music Eisteddfod in Llangollen in 1999, the choir spent a week in the Czech Republic as guests of the Choral Art Festival in Jihlava, a beautiful small town South-East of Prague.

The choir performed in various churches and castles and had excursions to a crystal factory and Gustav Mahler's birthplace. It was a busy week including 11 concerts which prepared them well for the contest in Wales. As Simon Tipping wrote in his book, 'Choir of the World' "While performance venues had been spectacular and inspiring, accommodation and meals had been of questionable standard at times, but nonetheless the choir had been together throughout, and a great spirit had developed."

Judging by the 2016 tour schedule, this visit to Czechia is hardly going to be a picnic. After the overnight long-haul flight from Singapore to Prague via Frankfurt, the tour party will have a day to recover in the Czech capital before setting off along the N69 into East Bohemia and the regional capital of Pardubice for five days of performing and competing.

Standing on the river Elbe (Czech: Labe), the city of Pardubice, founded in 1340, is 96 kilometres east of Prague. A well-travelled Kiwi has reported that it is a picturesque city of around 100,000 inhabitants. It is famous for its delicious gingerbread and an annual

steeplechase called 'Velká pardubická', a Czech version of the Aintree Grand National, which has been running since 1874 (you can see it on YouTube).

The International Festival of Academic Choirs started in 1968. The idea of organizing an international meeting of university choirs came from the Academic Choir of Pardubice, then associated with the former Institute of Chemical Technology (now the University of Pardubice). The Festival has been held every other year since 1980 and the international competition has become an important part of the Festival.

In 1998 the requirements for participation were changed from a purely academic event to include choirs in which at least 75 percent of the membership was between the ages of 18 and 30. Since its beginning, the Festival has hosted choirs from all around the world including Australia, United Kingdom, China, South Africa, the USA and Venezuela. The NZ Youth Choir will be the first ensemble to participate from New Zealand.

The venue for Festival concerts and competitions is the new University Hall within the University campus. Besides the main Festival concerts, other special concerts are held in towns around the East Bohemian region and NZYC will also perform in Chrudim and Česká Skalice. The final, 'Concert of Nations', will be held in the headquarters of the Festival's main sponsor, the CSOB insurance company.

The NZ Youth Choir is competing in four sections: Mixed Choir where they will be presenting

IN THIS EDITION

- From Bohemia's Woods and Fields
- Warnings of Potential Funding Decline
- Salut Printemp!
- Meet Our Sponsors
- Letter from the Chair
- Message from Roger Lloyd

CHOIRS AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND TRUST BOARD

Andrea Gray (Chair), Diana Cable, Les Foy, David Hamilton, Warwick Mitchell, Stephen Park, Diccon Sim

PO Box 25 025, Wellington 6146, New Zealand

Tel +64 4 499 0692

Email choirs@choirsnz.co.nz

Website www.choirsnz.co.nz



a programme of Peter Philips' 'Ecce Vicit Leo' (Renaissance), Peter Cornelius' 'Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht' (Romantic), Tuirina Wehi's 'Waerenga-a-Hika' (Composition written after 1950), and the set work, Zdeněk Lukáš's 'No man is an island'. These must be a capella works.

In the Folk Song section (performing works from the contestants own country), NZYC will present a traditional Karanga 'Ko Ngā Waka', Te Whānau Wehi 'Te Iwi E', and Douglas Mews' *Two NZ Folk Songs of the Sea* – 'Come All You Tonguers' and



IFAS Festival 2014



Česká Skalice

'Blood Red Roses'. For the contemporary music section they will perform Sarah McCallum's 'The Moon's Glow Once Lit' and R Murray Schafer's 'Epitaph for Moonlight'.

For the Jazz/Gospel category NZYC will offer 'This Little Light of Mine' (arr Moses Hogan), 'I'm Gonna Sing' (arr Van Ryckeghem) and Hoagy Carmichael's 'The Nearness of You' (arr Kirby Shaw). If selected for the Grand Prix Competition, they will perform Mendelssohn's 'Ehre sei Gott der Höhe', David Hamilton's 'Angele Dei' and Eric

Whitacre's 'Little Man in a Hurry'. That's a lot of music to perform and all from memory!

One of the stated aims on the website of the International Festival of Academic Choirs is "to ensure participants enjoy themselves, make new friends and leave with fond memories of the event." Hopefully the NZ Youth Choir will do all that and this relatively stable period in Bohemia will prepare the choir well for the following hectic travel and concert schedule in France and England.

WARNINGS OF POTENTIAL FUNDING DECLINE FOR THE ARTS

Readers are no doubt aware of articles in the media about a decline in arts funding due to fewer people gambling on the national lottery. Profits from Lotto are passed to the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board which, in addition to its grants to the New Zealand Film Commission and Sport New Zealand, provides two thirds of Creative New Zealand's funding.

In a recent announcement Stephen Wainwright, Chief Executive of Creative New Zealand said "The arts sector has benefited from steady increases in lottery profits peaking at \$37.38 million in 2013/14, which was a record profit year for Lotto NZ. In 2014/15 revenue fell to \$31 million and this financial year our latest forecast revenue from the NZLGB is \$26.31 million, which is \$3.69 million less than forecast at the start of the year." He went on to say "Creative New Zealand now stands to receive \$11 million less this financial year than it did two years ago in 2013/14.

"Since 2014/15 Creative New Zealand has been using financial reserves to cushion the effect on the arts sector and has reduced spending in the 2015/16 financial year by not renewing pilot projects. Unfortunately we are now unable to sustain our current level of support for artists and the arts in the coming financial year," said Mr Wainwright.

As a result of this Creative NZ's clients have

been asked to consider how they would handle a 10% drop in funding in 2017 compared to the amount they are receiving this year. In the case of Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust this would result in a reduction of around \$30,000 in its annual Creative NZ grant. Is this a serious problem? – it sure is!

What would this mean to Choirs Aotearoa? It could mean that the NZ Youth Choir will only be able meet once every year. Or it could mean that Voice NZ Chamber Choir, the only professional standard choir in New Zealand, will lose its annual self-promoted performance. The view of the Board of Trustees of Choirs Aotearoa is that either of these measures would unacceptably compromise each choirs' viability and jeopardise the high artistic standards for which they are known.

We are always looking for ways to reduce expenses without compromising artistic integrity. Our costs have not increased in the last five years and we run a tight ship. Cutting back the management infrastructure metaphorically collapses the stage from under our choirs – the almost one hundred singers and artistic staff who sing around New Zealand and internationally.

We are also working on ways of achieving longer term sustainable funding, with an initial step being the establishment of a foundation to build a capital fund.

Internal Affairs Minister Peter Dunne, who is also the chair of the Lottery Grants Board, said that "the government would not be topping up organisations who received less this year, and they should plan accordingly." From the Opposition Benches Labour's Arts, Culture and Heritage spokesperson Jacinda Ardern said "The Government must rethink the way the arts are funded after falling Lotto sales has left the sector with declining resources and increasingly vulnerable." To be fair, this is a structural issue for arts funding and governments of both persuasions have utilised the profits of gambling to sustain this valuable arts heritage, the cultural taonga of this country.

Creative New Zealand's triennial survey, 'New Zealanders and the Arts: Attitudes, Attendance and Participation in 2011' told us that most New Zealanders (80%) agree that the arts help define who we are as a nation. It also revealed that engagement in the arts remains strong with 85% of New Zealanders attending or being actively involved in the arts in the previous 12 month period.

We appreciate the early and clear warning that Creative NZ has provided. Choirs Aotearoa is currently consulting with our colleagues in the choral and general arts sector about how best to respond to this challenge, and will suggest ways you can help sometime soon.

Salut Printemps!

Artistic Director, Karen Grylls, introduces Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir's next concert.

Voices NZ Chamber Choir is delighted to present Salut Printemps! a concert welcoming Spring, which brings the beauty of trembling flowers, the fresh green growth, the animals awakening, the enchanting evenings, and the season of youth, love and light.

We begin with Debussy's *Salut Printemps* for women's choir written in 1882 with its vibrant outburst of the joy of Spring. "Greetings to you, Spring, season of youth... the bubbling sap rises, breaking its bands."

In direct contrast, Belgian composer Jean Absil's collection of animals brings the dromedary, the crayfish, the carp and the cat into our choral bestiary. These wonderful a cappella settings of texts by Guillaume Apollinaire will be heard for the first time in NZ.

The tambourine calls us to the Northern Hemisphere Spring in May in the second of Debussy's *Trois Chansons* and in the last piece, he calls Winter, a villain! Written in 1898 and 1908, these settings are a masterpiece of early 20th century chanson.

At the centre of the programme are the three settings by Lili Boulanger, the lesser known sister of Nadia Boulanger, who won the Prix de Rome in 1913. These settings are *Les Sirènes*, *Hymne au Soleil* and *Soir sur le Plaine*, written during Lili's years of apprenticeship as a composer. *Les Sirènes* sets a text by Charles Grandmougin, the beauty that charms the strongest; *Hymne au Soleil* invokes us to celebrate the rebirth of the sun every day and in *Soir sur le Plaine*, a magnificent setting of Albert Victor Samain's text, we see the golden sky in the West, as the sun sinks beneath the horizon and the heart's voice stops for the day. These works are scintillating and alluring.

Two works, *Petites Voix* for women's choir and the *Prayers of St. Francis*, patron saint of animals for men's choir, bring us a wonderful French colour and harmonic inflexion, which at once identifies Poulenc's musical language. We are delighted to welcome the boys from Choralation who will join our tenors and basses in this performance.

We conclude with some French Canadian repertoire. Mark Sirett's delicate and haunting setting *Ce Beau Printemps*, a song that celebrates the coming of Spring and young love. Patriquin's lively song sets a French text that is a game of rhymes and has a teasing sense of call and answer. The "tique tique tacque," the sound of the mill, is essentially nonsense yet evocative.

Most importantly, it is with the greatest pleasure we perform this recital with accompanist, Rachel Fuller, recently arrived from London. Rachel is known for her remarkable sense of orchestral colour and interpretation. We very much look forward to performing the Boulanger together. Don't miss it. See you there!

WHERE: St Luke's Church, Remuera at 5.00pm

WHEN: Sunday 25 September

TICKETS unreserved: Adult \$35, Student \$20.

Children under 12 with an adult – free admission

BOOKING: Eventfinda from 1 August (+ booking fee) and at the door (cash only)

Meet our sponsors

CHOIRS AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

MAIN FUNDING BODIES

NZYC PRINCIPAL SPONSOR



NEW ZEALAND YOUTH CHOIR

SECTION SPONSORS

Sopranos & Altos

Tenors

Basses

DEANE
ENDOWMENT
TRUST

Carolyn & Peter
DIESSL



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Change of Chief Executive

In February I received the resignation of **Roger Lloyd**, who has been the Chief Executive of Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand Trust for approximately five years. Over this period Roger has endeavoured to raise the public profile and appreciation of our two national choirs – the New Zealand Youth Choir and Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir – through social media and in-house publications. Using his experience leading other major music organisations, he has introduced a professional arts culture into Choirs Aotearoa's management and has striven to support the artistic vision of our organisation.



Arne Herrmann

Some personal highlights for Roger include the Mozart Requiem performance by Voices NZ and Orchestra Wellington in Wellington Cathedral in June 2012 and the joint recital 'Ata Riera' by our choirs in the Auckland Arts Festival last year. As with the tour to North America in 2013, Roger has been the architect of the upcoming NZ Youth Choir European Tour in July this year. The Trustees greatly appreciate the contribution Roger has made over the last five years. He will leave the organisation in very good shape on 27 May.

We have been recruiting Roger's replacement and I am delighted to announce that the Trust has appointed **Arne Herrmann**. Arne has secured this position after a thorough and well contested process which attracted over 20 high calibre applications. We were generously supported in the recruitment process by JacksonStone & Partners. Arne will commence his Chief Executive position on 28 May. His first official appearance will be at the Youth Choir's pre-tour "Farewell" concert on 29 May in Wellington.

Arne has worked extensively in arts administration with management and leadership roles at the Auckland Arts Festival, New Zealand Festival, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, the National Jazz Festival, and consulting roles in business development and marketing with organisations such as New Zealand Opera, Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival and Indian Ink Theatre Company.

The Trustees are looking to Arne to lead Choirs Aotearoa into its next phase of development – supporting the growth in the reach and impact of the wonderful music that our artistic team and singers produce. His understanding of and passion for the performing arts will be a great asset for Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand Trust.

– **ANDREA GRAY**

DONATIONS FORM

By donating money to Travel Donations you are making a practical contribution to performances or rehearsals through the travel costs. Supporting Donations underpin the structure supporting the NZ Youth Choir and Voices NZ Chamber Choir.

Please complete and post this form to
Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust, Freepost CHOIRS NZ,
PO Box 25025, Wellington 6146 (No stamp required)
or scan and email to choirs@choirsnz.co.nz
If you would prefer to do this online go to
www.choirsnz.co.nz/donate

TITLE **NAME**

.....
Mr, Mrs, Ms, other

POSTAL ADDRESS

.....
.....
.....
City & Post Code

TELEPHONE (home)

TELEPHONE (work)

MOBILE

EMAIL:

You can request that your details are removed from the database at any time.

Choose an amount you wish to donate \$.....
I wish to make... (PLEASE TICK ONE)

a Travel donation

a Supporting Donation

Payment details

Cheque Direct Credit Credit Card

Please check the box for your paying preference.

Paying by cheque

Make out your cheque to Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust.
Write *Travel* OR *Supporting* on the back and send it to the address above.

Paying by Direct Credit

Pay at your bank or online to: Choirs Aotearoa NZ Trust;
ANZ New Zealand Bank; Acc.No.: 06-0501-0042241-000
Code: *Travel* OR *Supporting* Donation
Reference: *Your family name and initial*

Paying by Credit Card through 'Givealittle'

Go to www.givealittle.co.nz/org/choirsNZ
Add *Travel* OR *Supporting* Donation in the comment box and
Your family name and initial.



Message from Roger Lloyd

Choral enthusiasts won't be surprised by Chair, Andrea Gray's announcement about a change of Chief Executive at Choirs Aotearoa. The prominent advertisements in the press and on our website rather gave the game away. This has, in fact, been brought about by my retirement from full-time work following a career of nearly 50 years in the music profession. It is a decision hastened somewhat by ill-health in recent times, however resuming work after enjoying a glorious Christmas/New Year summer break convinced me that the time had come to slow down – but not to stop entirely.

I gave Choirs Trustees three-and-a-half months notice which, in addition to regular duties, has enabled me to complete an important funding application and finalise arrangements for the NZ Youth Choir's upcoming international tour. As you will have read elsewhere in this edition, Choirs, together with other arts organisations, is facing the possibility of declining funding in addition to the ongoing challenges of arts management. Consequently, it is time, in rugby parlance, for "fresh legs" and I'm sure my successor, Arne Herrmann will provide these.

I will take this opportunity to express my admiration for the members of the NZ Youth Choir and Voices NZ Chamber Choir, who show great dedication and skill in their performances. Unlike many choirs who meet once a week, or perhaps more often prior to a concert, NZYC members come from around the country to attend a week-long course twice, or occasionally three times a year. Despite this, at the end of a week of rehearsals, they produce performances that vie with the best young choirs around the world and, as such, are excellent ambassadors for their country.

Voices NZ's modus operandi is almost that of freelance musicians being booked gig by gig and yet, once brought together, they meld into an international standard chamber choir at home in all styles from early music to premieres of commissioned works. In my experience, this is simply extraordinary. As Auckland Arts Festival Director Carla van Zon recently wrote "I am always able to say when talking with potential international partners when they require a choir that we have the best in the world". Of course, this kind of artistic quality doesn't happen by chance and the choirs' two Music Directors, Karen Grylls and David Squire, are widely acknowledged for these outstanding achievements.

Behind the scenes the voluntary Trustees wade through numerous Board papers in their governance role and donate their free time to this. I must also mention the often overlooked work of the administration team: I have worked with Accountant, Christine Garrett, in three different organisations over the last eight years and we were fortunate that in 2012 she was able to take on Choirs as a client. Communication Administrator, Murray Kirk, came to us at the beginning of last year and he skilfully executes his Choirs' PR and website work alongside his Massey University duties. Our distinctive brands and publications have benefited from the imaginative design of Auckland-based Tracey Asher.

Choirs' other full-time employee is the recently married Emma Billings née Dowdle. I have been fortunate to have worked with a few outstanding orchestral/operations managers in my 30 plus years in arts administration and Emma is one of them. She walks the narrow demarcation line between management and performers with expertise and good humour, which is greatly appreciated and recognized by all in the Choirs Aotearoa organisation.

There is just room for a final sales pitch. In times of uncertainty, support from the general public is essential for an organisation like Choirs Aotearoa. Needless to say, this is best shown through donations to our choirs' upkeep. Please note the form to the left of this column.

There is only one more thing to say, Goodbye!



Roger Lloyd with former Trustee David Caygill and Tim Brown of Infratili – Parliament Reception 2012

PHOTO: MATT GRACE