

Austinato



The Vocal Consort presents *Journeys* at Our Lady of Victories Basilica Camberwell, April 2022 (Photo by Jessica O'Meara)

From the Chair



Professor Stephen Duffy
Chair, Australian Boys Choral
Institute Board

The start of 2022 has been a great success for the Australian Boys Choral Institute. We have had an uninterrupted term of rehearsals, two concerts, and an Installations ceremony celebrating the achievements of our boys and young men with promotions to the next level of the Choir.

The calendar year started with the Australian Boys Choir Staff Soiree on Sunday 6th March; an outstanding success. Apart from being great teachers of music, we have incredibly talented music staff. They gave of their time and abilities to fundraise for the ABCI, but the event also raised the morale of the whole Institute with the first live performance in nearly a year. The Vocal Consort presented their first performance for the year with *Journeys* on April 7th in Our Lady of Victories Basilica, Camberwell. A beautiful Ukrainian anthem, performed as an encore, was a moving end to the concert.

Unfortunately, our wonderful General Manager, Ms. Katie Whitecross, recently decided to call time on her role with the Institute. We were sad when Katie announced her decision to leave this critical post late last year, as she has done an outstanding job over nearly six years; firstly as the Administrative Assistant to the then General Manager for about two and a half years, and then as General Manager. Katie stepped into the latter position at short notice, in late 2018, during a difficult time for the ABCI, but did an amazing job. Katie's passion for the Choir, her intelligence, organisational skills, and welcoming demeanour are characteristics that enhanced the standing of the ABCI and the role of the General Manager. Thank you from the Choir community for all your great work, Katie.

We are delighted that Ms. Elizabeth Lindner has taken over as the new General Manager. Liz has been involved with the ABCI since 2010 in various volunteer roles, including as Marketing Team Leader and Social Media Manager. Additionally, Liz has been a part of the Caring Team on numerous Weekend Workshops, Summer Schools, Australian and international tours (including the brilliant European Tour in 2018). Her professional background is in strategic management and communications. We have had the benefit of these skills many times since 2010 with respect to media campaigns, website redesign, branding, and during our 75th Anniversary celebrations in 2014. Clearly, Liz will be a great asset to the ABCI.

Finally, the ABCI Board and management recently attended a whole-day strategy session, and there were lots of great ideas and enthusiasm for the future. We have planned the direction of the Choir for the next five years and beyond. It promises to be an exciting time.

A Welcome Journey

A global, musical-mystery tour was the perfect antidote to two years of lockdowns and isolation, and the ideal launch for the Australian Boys Choral Institute 2022 concert season. The Vocal Consort, supported by the Institute's two groups for teenaged singers – the Kelly Gang and Cambiata – were just the men to lead that journey.

Featuring some of Consort's favourite repertoire, alongside titles from their second CD release of the same name, *Journeys* drew an appreciative audience to Our Lady of Victories Basilica, Camberwell, on the evening of Thursday 7 April.

Setting out from England with Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Vagabond*, TVC went on to encapsulate a brave new world with perhaps the most swashbuckling rendition of *The Mulligan Musketeers* performed by the group yet, before floating back to Ireland with the beguiling *Beati Quorum Via* by Charles Villiers Stanford.

Singing in languages other than English is a skill TVC members handle with aplomb, as evidenced through many of the pieces performed during the evening. However, Dan Bower's mastery of Gaelic as soloist in *Dúlámán* was particularly noteworthy, elevating the piece beyond the genre of folk music to impressive new heights.

Old favourites such as the traditional songs *Swansea Town*, *Shenandoah*, and *Loch Lomond*, with the vocal stylings of Old Boy and Teacher-in-Charge of the ABCI Cambiata Training Group Jack Jordan leading the charge, were justifiably well received. And a firm new favourite, Romanian-born György Orbán's devilish and slightly terrifying *Daemon Irreperit Callidus*, captivated.

The young men of the Kelly Gang were also given space to shine, frolicking in New Zealand with David Hamilton's *Poem about the Sun Slinking Off and Pinning Up a Notice*, before hopping back across the ditch to Australia for one of their favourite pieces, *Lachlan Tigers* as arranged by Trevor Jones, and finishing their set admirably with Timothy Takach's energetic *Go* from his *Three Songs for Young Men*.

The evening concluded with a powerful, massed choir of 50 male voices – a rare treat for Melbourne – with Cambiata singers joining The Vocal Consort and Kelly Gang on stage. *Keep Your Lamps*, underpinned by Consort stalwart Stuart Webb on percussion, and peppered with calls and cries from Clyde Saniga, Josh Vass, Alex Ritter and Jack Jordan, demonstrated the group's stunning adaptability, before they closed the program with the hauntingly beautiful *Frobisher Bay*, echoing from the far reaches of the Canadian Labrador Sea.

The encore, *Molitva za Ukrainu* (Prayer for Ukraine), sung in Ukrainian, was a final, poignant symbol of music's power to transcend borders and to unite.

The ABCI is indeed fortunate to have a plethora of musical talent on hand to inspire and mentor its younger singers, and to deliver such commanding performances.



Above: Zack, SAE. Right: The Vocal Consort.
(Photos by Jessica O'Meara)



The Sound of Collaboration

The ABCI is incredibly fortunate to enjoy an ongoing collaboration with SAE Creative Media Institute.

Choir parent Gareth Parton, SAE's Audio Department Co-ordinator, brokered the collaboration to impart 'real world' learning opportunities for SAE students while generating invaluable archival recordings of ABCI performances.

Recordings of 2021's glorious *Requiem for an Empress* concert can be accessed via Soundcloud: soundcloud.com/australian-boys-choir.

We look forward to sharing recordings of The Vocal Consort's recent *Journeys* concert very soon.

ABCI Concert Season 2022

Remaining Performances

- *Australian Destinations*: The Kelly Gang and the Training Choirs of the ABCI / Sunday 19th June, Auburn Uniting Church Hawthorn
- *Trans-Tasman Exchange*: The Australian Boys Choir and The Vocal Consort / Saturday 6th August, Ballarat – Venue TBC / Sunday 7th August, Melbourne – Venue TBC

- *Baltic Sounds*: The Vocal Consort and The Australian Boys Choir / Thursday 15th September, Our Lady of Victories Camberwell

World-wide digital access for 72 hours from 7:30pm (AEST) on Thursday 15th September 2022. For bookings, see www.australiandigitalconcerthall.com.

- *Home for the Holidays*: Saturday 10th December, Melbourne Recital Centre

Full concert details and booking information at www.australianboyschoir.com.au/concerts.

Spotlight: Former Head Chorister - Tim Matthews Staindl

In 2004, a young chorister stood in uniform on stage and received a badge in front of family, friends, and the entire ABCI community. It would be some time before he fully realised the distinction conferred when the badge was pinned to his lapel.

'Of course, I later came to feel honoured,' said Tim Matthews Staindl of the ceremony that installed him as the fourth of only five Head Choristers in ABCI's now 83-year history. It was an important moment for Tim and the Choir; the rank of Head Chorister recognises members who have shown exemplary leadership and is rarely conferred.

'As a young boy going through the ranks of the Choir, I greatly looked up to the leaders in the performing choir and marvelled at their musical ability. I hope that, in turn, I provided a good example for the younger boys during my time,' says Tim.

Tim recalls several highlights during his time with the ABCI. He started as a Probationer in 1999 and became a Senior Singer just two years later. This swift progression meant he was involved in a decade of touring, including trips to Malaysia, Indonesia, and the United States, along with several national tours. He says he loved the sense of adventure that came with touring with his Choir friends.

'The tours also meant a very intense period of rehearsing and performing, which resulted in a polished musical set,' he said, adding that the Choir's homecoming concert after the 2002 *AmericaFest* tour was a particularly memorable performance with which he was involved.

Tim went on to study music at the University of Melbourne and, while doing so, returned to tutor at the ABCI.

'When I was tutoring the Junior Singers, I told some of the boys that their sight singing was better than many of my peers at Melbourne's Conservatorium of Music. I don't think they believed me, but it was absolutely true.'

Tim says the ABCI's high standard of musical education is what sets it apart from other Australian children's choirs. 'During my decade [with the Choir], I received a phenomenal musical education that I didn't fully appreciate at the time.'

Soon after finishing his music degree, Tim realised that his passion for singing in close harmony ensembles would make it difficult to earn a living as a musician. He returned to university to study law and, after several years as a practicing lawyer, will become a barrister later this year.

'The beauty of music theory and musicianship is that it provides a wealth of transferable knowledge and skills,' says Tim. 'My understanding of language, mathematics, art, and law has been greatly shaped by my love for music, which began at the ABCI.'

Despite his busy legal career, Tim is still very much involved in music. He has sung with numerous choirs, and he formed *Thursday's Child*, an a cappella group that has just had its debut performance in May this year. He also still plays piano and is known to whip out the *New Real Book of Jazz Standards* to play and sing at home.

'I love going to concerts, and particularly seeing old uni or music friends making their way on stage,' he says, adding that he has no 'pearls of wisdom' for current Choir members – beyond this insight: 'Singing is a wonderful thing, and what's better than singing with your talented friends? Enjoy!'



L-R Anish Nair,
Tom Goodwin,
Andrew Davenport,
Fraser Christie,
Stewart Webb,
Tim Matthews Staindl
and Dominic Yu,
photographed in 2005



Uģis Prauliņš (Photo: Supplied)

Breaking boundaries: where choirs and rock music meet

Uģis Prauliņš wouldn't be the first former choir boy who turned to rock music.

As a child, Prauliņš sang in the boys' choir of Riga's impressive medieval cathedral. He returned to his choral roots in 2002 after decades of playing in Latvian rock bands, writing the spine-tingling *Missa Rigensis* for his alma mater. His career has also encompassed pioneering efforts in the genre of folk music, as well as works for ballet, film and television.

Continuing the ABCI's travel-themed concert season of 2022, and to mark the 20th anniversary of the piece, the Institute presents *Baltic Sounds* in its return to the stunning acoustic of Our Lady of Victories in Camberwell. Prauliņš' music is an exciting new addition to the Choir's repertoire.

The mass itself was brought to world-wide attention in a stunning premiere recording by the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and conductor Stephen Layton on the Hyperion label. In the notes accompanying the recording, English composer Gabriel Jackson provided an apt overview of the work: 'The diversity and resourcefulness of vocal scoring throughout are striking. The declamatory supplication of the Kyrie is both eternal and modern in its added-note richness, while the sotto voce keening that ends the movement is shockingly potent. The dancing, glistening opening of the Gloria owes as much to rock music in its syncopated canonic build-up as it does to any older polyphonic tradition, the dramatic antiphonal exchanges at 'Domine Deus' have an ancient, hieratic quality and the return of a more outgoing music at 'Quoniam tu solus' reaches a climax of near-hysterical joy before bell-tone pedal notes herald a melismatic series of Amens.'

Jackson goes on to note that 'the pulsing clusters that open the Credo are a powerful symbol of the urgency of belief. A mosaic of varied textures follows—joyful quasi-Baroque roudades, chant-inflected canons over open-fifth drones (a haunting moment of stasis), anguished overlapping chromatic sighs at 'passus est'; and the pointillist, off-beat figure at 'Crucifixus' is both a graphic representation of the driving-in of nails and at the same time built into a groove-based ostinato. The movement ends with a soaring pan-consonant choral carillon, repeated over and over again, while another group of voices whispers the final lines of the text with ever-increasing fervour. The brief Sanctus begins with an awed hush and concludes with exultant 'swung' Hosannas and a final chord that is deliciously unexpected. The Agnus Dei achieves no easy resolution, the uncertainty of its final bars unwinding into a

Post-Communion where long-breathed vocalise underpins an ad lib spoken prayer (in this instance the 'Actus caritatis'). The effect is both theatrical and numinous, as the public face of the music slowly dissolves into inwardness and deep repose.'

'Written for a choir of boys and men, and with an intensity and drive stemming from Uģis' extensive cross-genre exploration, the *Missa Rigensis* is a logical addition to our repertoire,' says ABCI Artistic Director Nick Dinopoulos. 'The singers are looking forward to putting their stamp on the piece.'

Fresh from their Australian Digital Concert Hall debut last month with *Austrian Encounters*, this event will once again attract a global audience on the innovative platform, now in its third year.

Headlined by The Vocal Consort, and with music by the most-performed living composer in the world, Estonia's ever-popular Arvo Pärt, alongside leading Lithuanian luminary Vytautas Miškinis to round out the program, this is sure to be yet another highlight of the musical calendar in Melbourne.

Of his approach to life and art Uģis Prauliņš says that 'Music and love explain everything', indicating the depth of the experience ABCI audiences are set to enjoy.

Baltic Sounds will be performed at:

OUR LADY OF VICTORIES, CAMBERWELL

Thursday 15th September 2022 | 7:30pm

548 Burke Road, Camberwell

Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BVNTH

**AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL CONCERT HALL
LIVESTREAM**

World-wide digital access for 72 hours from 7:30pm (AEST) on Thursday 15th September 2022.

See www.australiandigitalconcerthall.com for bookings and further details.

Memories of *AmericaFest*: 20 Years On

As the arts emerges from its enforced hiatus and we celebrate live performance once more, we think back to a time when the ABCI travelled to share its voice and vision with the world.

This year marks 20 years since the ABCI last attended *AmericaFest*, a 10-day festival that brought together choirs from around the world. The invitation-only, bi-annual event was held from 1994 until 2002. In 1998, 2000, and 2002, the Australian Boys Choir and The Vocal Consort represented the country with distinction, both musically and in their conduct.

ABCI singers performed at St John's Abbey in Minnesota, a grand building with a capacity of over 1500. The modern building was designed in the early 1950s for an expanding Benedictine Order that had outgrown its original abbey. It was considered an unlikely venue for the Choir's performance of traditional and contemporary Australian pieces, including *Past Life Melodies* by Sarah Hopkins, a medley of Australian folk songs incorporating *Waltzing Matilda* and *Botany Bay*, and a work more familiar to American audiences, the patriotic *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

Pomp and ceremony were hallmarks of the two large, public concerts. Carrying the Australian flag, Choir Leader David Carbines proudly led the ABCI contingent. It was clear the Choir was well-prepared, musically and technically, readily sight-reading scores. Many other attendees struggled to sight-read; a skill ABCI members master early in their rigorous training.

Funding tours of up to 40 people to the USA was not an easy task. To assist with the costs of the 1998 tour, the ABCI sold merchandise as it travelled. The items included printed copies of Favourite Rounds and Canons, which many choral music instructors acquired. Australian Boys Choir hats were another popular item, selling out early in the tour. Evelyn Douglas, a carer for the boys quipped, 'there were so many others wearing our hats, you could not distinguish the Aussies from everyone else!'

The popularity of the hats reflected the camaraderie that had developed between participants. The boys made friends easily

'The purpose of AmericaFest was to make great music and good friends, and have some fun. We all worked very hard on those three aspects to the detriment of our sleep allocation but it was, however, a most memorable experience.'

Evelyn Douglas

with those from America and Canada. Despite the language barrier, some forged ties with boys from China and the Czech Republic.

These friendships had been fostered, no doubt, through their common love of music and the various social activities that had been organised throughout the festival. One such activity included the boys being divided into groups to stamp their handprints onto a square of calico using vibrant paints. The fabrics were then sewn together to form two colourful banners which were displayed at public performances. The banners symbolised the friendships that had blossomed through shared experiences. As Evelyn reminisced, 'The purpose of *AmericaFest* was to make great music, good friends, and to have some fun. We all worked very hard on those three aspects to the detriment of our sleep, but it was a most memorable experience.'

Amid the bustle of rehearsing and performing were moments of leisure. Being summer, water sports at local pools and lakes were popular activities. Former ABCI Chorister and tour participant Adrian Dusting recalls, 'we taught the Americans [Australian Rules] footy.' The boys left part of a great Australian tradition in America.

Each appearance at *AmericaFest* was followed by a tour of several States and later also Canada. These engagements comprised a mixture of sightseeing and choral performances. After the 2000 tour, Chorister Stewart Burns said, 'an experience like this may only happen once in a lifetime – I have been very lucky to enjoy it twice.'

Despite the excitement of meeting their welcoming host families, and much-anticipated visits to places such as the Mall of America, Universal Studios, and Camp Snoopy, the young choristers worked hard during the rigorous tour schedule, with very little time for rest. Gabriel Lynch, a Chorister on tour, said '*AmericaFest* was terrific... but sometimes became exhausting.'

On their return journey in 1998, the weary choristers slept through the whole flight and even missed their meals. They were welcomed home with two servings of breakfast and quickly recovered to perform at *Postcard from Abroad*, the homecoming concert of the tour at Melba Hall.

Such grit is a testament to the boys' dedication and their love of musical performance. Perhaps this is the essence of the ABCI; whether they are expanding their horizons through international travel, or harnessing online technology to keep the music flowing, their commitment to excellence remains.





Choir boys: Sebastian Taylor-Jarvol, Daniel Bower and Adrian Dusting have returned from a tour of the United States with the Australian Boys' Choir.

Choir returns from US tour

THREE Mt Waverley students sang with Australian Boys' Choir during a music festival and choral tour in the United States.

Adrian Dusting, 13, Sebastian Taylor-Jarvol, 12, and Daniel Bower, 11, performed with the choir as one of five international choirs invited to sing at the AmericaFest in Minnesota from June 23 to July 4.

The choir then toured around four midwest states and returned to Australia on July 17.

Their repertoire comprised a range of traditional and contemporary Australian works, including *Past Life Melodies* by Sarah Hopkins, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, and a medley of Australian folk songs which included *Waltzing Matilda* and *Botany Bay* and Twenty-six choir members travelled to the United States accompanied by a vocal consort made up of nine adult males.

The boys will perform in a showcase concert of their United States tour on August 1 at Melbourne University's Melba Hall.

Tickets: 9888 4898.



An "AmericaFest Moments" Remembrance
 Abbey Concerts
 Marvellous Music
 Exciting Events
 Rainy Days (the music!)
 Irish Tune from County Derry
 Collegeville
 Ah si mon moine voulait danser!
 Foreign Friends
 Extremely tiring
 St John's University
 Teaching Americans footy!
 Adrian Dusting

CHANT

Postcard From Abroad

The Australian Boys Choir & The Vocal Consort return from AmericaFest.

A Concert at Melba Hall, University of Melbourne Saturday, August 1, 8:00pm

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 P.O. Box 292
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ABCI Mid-Year Giving Appeal

Joining the Australian Boys Choral Institute has been a remarkable journey for my sons, my husband and daughter and myself. It has taken us to some of the most incredible music venues in Melbourne, regional Victoria, Australia and the world. Exposed us to music so beautiful that we have been incredulous, elated and moved to tears, often simultaneously. Fostered treasured friendships that will last a lifetime. And opened doors to opportunities beyond anything we had imagined.



The Australian Boys Choir, May 2021 (Photo by Jane Kupsch)

And now it has led me to take on the role of General Manager, after more than a decade volunteering my time to support the Choir in many different ways.

The Australian Boys Choral Institute is an organisation that depends on the generosity of its community to really shine, never more so than right now, as we take our first steps out of the shadows of the pandemic.

Please, would you consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Australian Boys Choir at this critical time? Together we can bring the music back to life and show the world how beautifully boys can sing!

Elizabeth Lindner, ABCI General Manager

The Australian Boys Choir

Auditions

Boys aged 7 to 9 can apply today.
All levels of singing experience welcome.
Based in Melbourne.

Call 9818 4818 for more information.
australianboyschoir.com.au/join

excellence is a musical head start

Tyro singer Herbie, aged 8. Recital Centre 2019. Photo by Jane Kupsch.



Donate online today

www.givenow.com.au/australianboyschoir

The Australian Boys Choral Institute/The Australian Boys Choir Fund is an endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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If you would like to receive *Austinato* by email, please contact the Choir Office.

The Australian Boys Choir

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