



Illawarra Choral Society News Bulletin to Members. No. 1 2016

Dear members

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and a great holiday break. Now it's time to get back into our routine of rehearsals and practise as we start on the first of our concerts for the year. Everyone to whom I have spoken is looking forward to getting started on *Stabat Mater*. This will be a challenge for many of us, (including me), who will learn their voice part for the first time. We will, as usual, make sure that you are supported as much as possible with links to learning sites, learning CD's and extra voice part rehearsals for those who can fit these in.

The committee met last week and got through quite a pile of work to make sure that we are all ready for the year ahead.

Rehearsals

FIRST REHEARSAL IS MON 1 FEB 2016

Hopefully, you all had this marked up in your diaries and it won't come as a shock. If you are in regular contact with any of the members who don't receive email, will you please also remind them!

Start time is 7:00pm until at least the end of first semester when the uni. will review its need for the room again. However, there will be the occasional night when access to the room changes; but we will advise you accordingly.

I can also advise you at this stage that there will be a **rehearsal on Easter Monday**. We really need all the rehearsals we can get for this work and Meryl wants to include this date. We understand that some of you will not be available but we usually find that sufficient numbers are able to attend at the end of holiday weekends to make this worthwhile.

Prospective members

I have had several enquiries through the website message box about joining the choral society. I hope that some of these people will come to our first rehearsal on Monday. Please be prepared to make them very welcome and explain what goes on at rehearsals. Please make a point of wearing your badges to assist them with working out who is who.

Organised chaos

We know that the first rehearsal is a bit chaotic because of giving out new music and so on. Please play a part in helping to get things moving along. You can assist by arriving a bit earlier than usual and staying focussed on collecting music, assisting new people and being ready to begin working on the music.

Venue for first concert

The venue for **Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*** on **Sat 7 May** at **2:00pm** will be **Wesley Church on the Mall**. The committee has decided to cancel the booking with the Town Hall and the reasons for this are detailed in the box below.

In general, the choral society has 'outgrown' the capacity of Wesley church in terms of seating available and room for the choir itself as well as instruments and soloists. However, Meryl and the committee agree that, for this particular concert, it will be suitable. We will just be accompanied by the organ and, although we and the soloists will be a tight fit, this should create an intimate atmosphere. Based upon audience figures for comparable recent concerts, we are not expecting a larger audience than can be accommodated in the church.

Update on Relations with Wollongong Town Hall Management

As advised to you at the AGM, in the contract with the Town Hall for the Messiah concert there were some changes in the proportion of the ticket revenue to be withheld. Following the concert, the TH paid us very late and outside the terms of the contract. Furthermore, when we analysed the actual financial results from the concert, we found that the management withheld 20% of concert revenue as compared with the 10% withheld under the Pegasus regime and the tiny 1.5% withheld by 'Try Booking' which we have used for the Dapto concerts when we managed our own front-of-house.

The committee has agreed that I will write to the Wollongong City Council General Manager, David Farmer, provide him with some recent facts and figures and ask him to review the business model for the running of the TH in relation to community groups like ourselves. We can make a strong argument that there is something wrong with a system when a concert with relatively low production costs can draw a large audience but still not cover overall costs.

Venue for second concert

We had expected the venue for the **Winter Wonderland** concert to be the Dapto Anglican Church auditorium. However, we have not received replies to our enquiries and are aware of some difficult circumstances which will preclude us using this venue. The committee is now investigating another venue which we think will be suitable for this concert and will confirm this as soon as possible.

Publicity team

The committee has discussed how this important area will be managed. The work can be split into several smaller areas and we already have members who are willing to take on some of these. I will be able to give you more details in a week or so. But we still need a coordinator. The main requirement for this role is that the person is prepared to attend most committee meetings (around 11 a year) and communicate between the committee and the various people working on publicity tasks. There is no requirement for special expertise and, if you can work on a schedule, talk to people about progress on tasks and report to the committee, then this is the job for you! If you are prepared to give this a go please let me know as soon as possible.

That's all for now. Looking forward to seeing you on Monday

Dorothy Ebblewhite
President
Illawarra Choral Society