St Paul's Cathedral
MUSIC FOUNDATION Newsletter
No. 43 - November 2025

Above: Tony Way Conducts at the Praise the Lord Concert, St Patrick's Cathedral

From the Acting Dean

The Revd Canon Heather Patacca

What an absolute joy to be back at the Cathedral and immersed in the beautiful music that enriches our worship! There really isn't anything like Choral Evensong at the end of the day to make whatever may have happened during the day fade into perspective. I have on many occasions in the past, as Precentor, joked about 'my personal choir', and I can only say that it is a delight to once again be in the midst of this music bringing glory to God and lifting our eyes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are always very grateful for the generosity of all those who support the Music Foundation. At present the Foundation is looking to provide for the following necessary improvements to enable our musicians in their ministry. Our storage cupboards for our music library are past full to the gunnels. We desperately need to improve storage to take good care of our music resources. Lighting in the third-floor rehearsal room is less than adequate and requires improvement. Retro-fitted double glazing to the windows in the rehearsal room will reduce street noise there. As always, we are dependent on your support through donations to accomplish these projects. The costings for the cupboards are $2000, the lighting $500, and the double glazing $3600. There is a donation form included with this newsletter for

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St Paul's Cathedral Music Foundation enables gifted singers - boys, girls, women and men - to perform wonderful music five days a week.

St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne: a home for great music.

your convenience. You might also like to remember the Foundation in your will and make a lasting bequest to Music at St Paul's Cathedral.

My sincere thanks to you for your interest and part in the continuing work of the Foundation. Please enjoy reading the updates and news in this letter. We very much look forward to seeing you at the Cathedral soon.

Grace and peace,
The Revd Canon Heather Patacca, Acting Dean.

Christmas at the Cathedral

Philip Nicholls, Director of Music

'I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'

Isaiah 43.19a

In our efforts to include the voices of children and young people in planning worship. I've often found that the forum in which children are asked for their input is really important. I tried asking for input in a rehearsal, and some of the older (and louder?!) voices spoke up, but the younger and quieter ones were reluctant. I encouraged both girl and boy choristers to speak to me in a quiet moment if they had suggestions of music they'd like to sing. In one such moment, our boys' Dean's Chorister Max Lydon pointed me towards a piece of music they were all talking about but which they never thought we could sing. It is really tricky and includes lots of body percussion. I was really taken with it and took it to the Dean to see if he was happy to include it in our carol service. In the event, it became the focus of our whole Christmas Carol Service this year.

The work is entitled *Nova, nova*, which means 'New, new' and it was composed by Iain Farrington. In this year when so much is changing for the Anglican church in Melbourne with a new Archbishop and likely new directions, the Dean chose the Isaiah text quoted above as the basis for the whole service.

Farrington says of his composition:

'*Nova, nova* is a setting of a traditional English text from the 15th century, based on St Luke's Gospel. It tells of the angel Gabriel visiting Mary with news that she will give birth to Jesus. The music is jazz influenced with its bluesy harmonic inflections, rhythmic drive, percussive effects and exuberant energy. In the final section, the mood becomes openly joyful and breaks out into a scene of celebration. *Nova, nova* was commissioned by the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge in 2022.'

This series of events has given the children and young people in the Cathedral Choir the sense that they are empowered to be involved in high level planning, and we as a worshipping community will benefit from it greatly.

Make sure you come along to hear *Nova, nova* as well as all else at our Christmas Carol Services – details are included elsewhere in the Newsletter. May all that God is doing anew in your life be fulfilling and lifegiving this Christmas and in future.

Jimmy Hilton Installed at Hereford

Philip Nicholls, Director of Music

Following on from our special on Jimmy Hilton in June's Newsletter, we can report that Jimmy has now been installed as an Alto Lay Clerk Scholar at Hereford Cathedral in England. One of his former teachers at TGS, Ben Ryder, and Melbourne Lay Clerks Niki Ebacioni and Peter Campbell have seen him sing Evensong there with their own eyes! Here is a photo to prove it. Well done, Jimmy, and good luck with the sightreading!

A Note from the Director of Music

You may have heard that I had some health difficulties in October-November. I have had some treatment, and after rest and rehabilitation, have begun back at work today, Tuesday 18 November.

Thanks for your care and prayers,
– Philip Nicholls.

Praise the Lord!

Tony Way, Director of Music St Francis's Church Lonsdale Street, and friend of our Music Foundation

A Highlight of Term 3 Music Making: Praise the Lord!
A Celebration of the Life of John Henry Byrne
St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne, 22 August 2025

It was a cold Friday night in the middle of winter, but some 400 people came to St Patrick's Cathedral to hear its Gothic Revival vaults resound to glorious music produced by three of Melbourne's best known choirs together with orchestra and soloists.

All this was made possible by John Henry Byrne – singer, composer, author, raconteur and passionate advocate for fine sacred music. John, who for half a century, had been a member of St Francis' Choir died on Holy Saturday 2021. It was his wish that after his death a fund be established with the purpose of supporting education, research and promotion of fine liturgical and sacred music with a preference for the Catholic and Anglican traditions.

A grant from this fund enabled Melbourne to enjoy its own "Three Choirs Festival". John, strongly committed to musical ecumenism, would have rejoiced that the choirs of St Patrick's, St Francis' and St Paul's Cathedral came together to collaborate on performances of Louis Vierne's mighty Messe solennelle, Mozart's Missa Brevis in D, K. 194 and Gabriel Fauré's evergreen *Cantique de Jean Racine.*

Tailor-made for such an occasion, the Vierne was a stirring curtain-raiser, creating an apt sense of occasion, conducted by St Patrick's director of music Philip Matthias and underpinned by the able accompanying of cathedral organist Dion Henman. Mozart's early Mass in D, with all its charming invention was accompanied by The Symphonia of Melbourne with leader Wilma Smith and soloists Merlyn Quaife, Sally-Anne Russell, Timothy Reynolds and Nicholas Dinopoulos under the direction of St Francis' Choir director Tony Way. Providing a fitting finale, Fauré's gentle canticle benefitted from a luscious orchestration by Roger Heagney, conducted by St Paul's director of music, Philip Nicholls.

The final words of this piece, "look with favour upon thy faithful people now gathered here to praise thee; receive their hymns offered to thy endless glory; may they go forth filled with thy gifts" provided the perfect musical prayer.

In between these massed items came a remembrance of John by his brother David, as well as individual brackets from each choir which highlighted their particular areas of expertise.

St Paul's sang three classic items from the English repertory. The rarely heard Creed from the otherwise popular Communion Service in F by Harold Darke proved a revelation of the composer's skill and was accompanied by St Paul's sub-organist Mark Slavec. Assistant organist Roslyn Carolane accompanied Elgar's fine miniature, the *Ave Maria,* Op. 2 No. 2, while cathedral organist Siegfried Franke accompanied the classic Magnificat from Herbert Howells' Evening Service "Collegium Regale".

St Patrick's Choir focussed on its engagement with First Nations peoples by performing *Earth Song* by Frank Ticheli, David Leh's *Dhirili* with didgeridoo accompaniment and Miseron Levi's Baba Waier with drums. In a more classic ve\[in, the boys performed an excerpt from Francis Grier's lively ascension motet The Lord Goes Up, showing considerable vocal agility. All pieces were performed from memory – an impressive feat.

St Francis' Choir performed excerpts from John's *Mass in Honour of St Mary MacKillop*, orchestrated by Roger Heagney. Mary MacKillop was a regular worshipper at St Francis' and received all the sacraments of Christian initiation within its walls, therefore it was appropriate for John to honour the saint who prayed in the same church that he served for so many years. John's admiration for the music of Vaughan Williams is reflected in his score and was amplified by Roger's atmospheric orchestration.

Contrasting the contemplative mood of the Mass, came Mozart's very early Veni, *Sancte Spiritus,* K. 47 with its decidedly rollicking mood.

The whole concert was enthusiastically received by the audience and energised all the participants to the point where many were asking "When's the next one?" As they say in the classics, "Stay tuned"!

The John Henry Byrne Liturgical and Sacred Music Fund is administered by the Australian Communities Foundation. Enquiries may be directed to Mr Thomas Lopez: thomas@communityfoundation.org.au

Note from our Director of Music, Philip Nicholls: We are indebted to the John Henry Byrne Liturgical and Sacred Music Fund, which is a major contributor to our Music Foundation.

St Paul's Cathedral presents
THE LUNCHTIME CONCERT SERIES
Wednesdays at 1pm
cathedral.org.au

This Page: Choral Eucharist at St Paul's Cathedral. Photos by Ming Zhou.

Advent and Christmas Services

Philip Nicholls, Director of Music

This year our Advent Carol Service takes the form of an Installation Service for our new Archbishop Ric Thorpe – we look forward to welcoming him. Seats will be hard to come by at this service, so we recommend joining on our livestream at 4pm on Sunday 30 November:
http://www.youtube.com/@StPaulsCathedralMelbourne

Our Services

Third Sunday of Advent • Sunday 14th December
4pm Christmas Lessons & Carols
Preacher: the Dean

Christmas Eve • Wednesday 24th December
3pm Children's Christmas Service

6pm Service of Lessons and Carols
Preacher: the Dean

9pm First Eucharist of Christmas
Preacher: the Dean

11pm Midnight Mass
Preacher: the Dean

Christmas Day • Thursday 25th December
8am BCP Holy Communion with Carols
Preacher: the Precentor

10am Christmas Choral Eucharist
Preacher: the Archbishop

Reserve your seats

Supporters of our Music Foundation are eligible for reserved access to 2 seats for our Christmas Carol Services – at 4pm 14 December, or 6pm on Wednesday 24 December. Please indicate whether you would like a seat reserved for you and one other guest by returning the enclosed form via post to 209 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000 or, by email to jmcfadyen@stpaulscathedral.org.au

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For information about the Foundation, contact dean@stpaulscathedral.org.au
For information about the Choir and music, contact the Director of Music: pnicholls@stpaulscathedral.org.au

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