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VISION



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FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

Music marking time

Over the years I have come to understand that music provides the most powerful way to mark time. This is of course especially true of the time of Lent and Easter. Together with the time of Advent, there is no other season for which we have such a deep and wide ranging musical legacy to choose from.

However the issue here is not simply the music we choose to listen to. The issue here is to listen to the same music every year during this time. The issue is to allow the music to engrave the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday into our hearing and into our lives. The challenge is start 'hearing and experiencing' Lent and Easter

In a previous congregation we started the custom of going to the church early on Easter Sunday morning to listen to Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* or better known as his *Vespers*. The idea was to go to church while it was still dark and then to be guided by the music towards the first light. The Vespers would end the moment the sun appeared on the horizon.

I would never hear the Vespers without physically feeling the cold of the morning, the darkness of the church, and the feeling of awe while leaving the church. Seeing the sun rise was seeing the darkness of death disappear.

Perhaps some of the most loved and well known music for this time of the year are Bach's Passions. To me personally, there is nothing that captures the emotions of Good Friday better than the concluding chorus of the St Matthew Passion: *Wir setzen uns mit Tränen nieder* (in tears of grief we leave Thee).

However, what I would most like to see happen, is for us to again, learn to listen to Handel's Messiah, not as Christmas music or choral music or whatever other designation it is given, but to listen and appreciate it for what it was intended: namely music for Holy Week.

Messiah was first performed in Dublin, on the 13th April 1742 in Holy Week. The tradition was to listen to a number of the oratorios during the time of Lent and then conclude this time with Messiah during Holy Week.

It has been pointed out that Messiah is a meditation on the Crucifixion and Resurrection with a long introduction. This long introduction with its focus and well known choruses celebrating the birth of Christ has led people to believe that the setting of the work should be Advent or Christmas.

However, this is not correct. Messiah is intended for Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Therefore, the best place to listen to it is in a church. But to really appreciate it, one has really *listen* to the words; one has to allow the music to create the images in our mind; we have to allow the power of the music to sweep us away from simply appreciating the beauty of the music to appreciating the beauty of the **One** who was despised and rejected by all men



Ockert Meyer

Editorial

The first issue of *Vision* 2014 comes out post Christmas and pre Lent. The old year ended with the departure of our dearly loved, effervescent young choir conductor, Anthony Pasquill.

In January this year our much admired, erudite Minister, the Rev Dr Ockert Meyer announced his departure from St Stephen's at the end of March. Needless to say, there were many exclamations of despair. However, the middle 'pillar' of the 3 pillars of Christianity is **Hope** and we must not despair.

We have a new choir conductor, David Hood to whom we offer our hearty welcome.



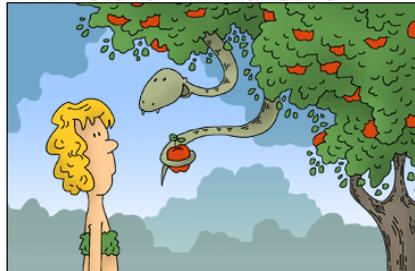
The Rev. Ockert Meyer will preach his last sermon on the 30th of March. There will be a formal farewell and for him after this service. We thank him sincerely for his very inspiring sermons and wish him all the best and a fulfilling future in his new church in Canberra.

It is always hard to say good bye, but every stage of life is a parting. Yet, the distance between us is nothing when we have quick modes of communication.

Very especially when we pray, time and distance vanish.

In the words of Dickens' Tiny Tim, "God bless us all".

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(See Genesis 3) 12-30-2013
REMEMBER THAT NEW YEAR RESOLUTION YOU MADE TO DO NEW THINGS?

Poetry Corner

In Church

Often I try
to analyze the quality
of its silences.
Is this where God hides
from my searching? I have stopped to listen,
after the few people have gone,
to the air recomposing itself
for vigil. It has waited like this
since the stones grouped themselves about it.
These are the hard ribs
of a body that our prayers have failed
to animate. Shadows advance
from their corners to take their possession
of places that light held
for an hour. The bats resume
their business. The uneasiness of the pews
ceases. There is no other sound
in the darkness but the sound of a man
breathing, testing his faith
on emptiness, nailing his questions
one by one to an untenanted cross.
R.S. Thomas

I Shall Not Live in Vain

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.
Emily Dickinson

I Was Hungry

I was hungry
and you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger;
I was imprisoned
and you crept quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release;
I was naked
and in your mind, you debated the morality of my appearance;
I was sick
and you knelt and thanked God for your health;
I was homeless
and you preached to me of spiritual shelter of the love of God;
I was lonely
and you left me alone to pray for me.
You seem so holy, so close to God.
But I am still very hungry
and lonely
and cold.

Anon

Readers' Contributions

ANTHONY PASQUILL – GENTLEMAN, CHOIRMASTER, FRIEND

Anthony spent 4 years with the St Stephen's choir and we have spent 3 of those years with him. We were all very aware that we had someone very special in him. – "we" being the choir, the congregation, visitors and the wonderful St Stephen's Brass Ensemble which he conducted with such aplomb, style and good humour. We have been around so many churches over the years, and Anthony was the breath of fresh air we needed. He is a rare specimen!



Our Music team at Stephen's is the strong and united framework that enables us to do works usually reserved for much larger choirs which we would not have thought possible. Visitors were always delighted with Anthony's affability, enthusiasm and unfailing musicianship which encompassed conducting, teaching, as well as singing any part as was required. He had the uncanny and innate ability to "rescue" any voice part. He could switch to different parts immediately and with ease.

Anthony was also the Deputy Director of the Sydney Philharmonic Choir at the Opera House and the Leader of the Bel Acapella choir and we know that he is also involved in other choirs and groups as needed; and is accompanist for HSC students.

Anthony was a thorough gentleman at all times, always professional, wise, punctual, and, even though he was exhausted from his many week-end demands and concerts, somehow managed to find time and energy each week for us. Choir practice was always so much fun and yet, remarkably efficient and focussed. He knew when to rest us and when to drive us and that takes a lot of experience, wisdom and empathy. He had endless patience, a huge sense of humour and encouraged all of us no matter what our ability, age or experience.

We appreciated his emphasis on the "text" which brings vocal music from the Scriptures and the psalms to life. Where do you get a conductor who just "gets it all right" with such sensitivity and thorough musicianship? We do so want our contribution to be worthy of what we can give to the glory of God. Anthony and the team have enabled us to do that.

A striking feature of Anthony was his good manners: he never failed to thank the choir, organists and soloists at the end of every session, and the readers. What a brilliant communicator and encourager! He taught us that the important thing was to "enjoy" our music and yet, always encouraged thorough preparation.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, Anthony. You have blessed us and enriched us more than you know. We can relate to Katisha in "The Mikado" as she exclaims, "Oh, where shall I FIND ANOTHER!"

Arthur and Ruth Lockley

The Spectator - 18 January 2014
Contributed by: Geoff Allan

WHY WE WORSHIP AT ST STEPHENS UNITING CHURCH

God is present

The environment is peaceful and serene
The flowers are a reminder of his creation
The singing and music are a testimony of praise to him

The opportunity to meet with committed Christians
We are thankful to all those who volunteer their time to do His work
Christians should give of their services with very little payment
Each Bible reading is a sermon
His word is preached
The sermon is always eloquent and thought provoking
We leave the service having been blessed and forgiven.

David Mutton.



OH NOTHING'S WRONG, I JUST THOUGHT
THERE WOULD BE A FEW MORE
PEOPLE UP HERE

From the Organ Bench

After a very successful series of Christmas services at St Stephen's, we sadly farewelled our conductor for the past four years, Anthony Pasquill. He found that he needed to spend more time with his wife, now that he is working full time; plus has an extraordinary number of rehearsals to attend each week. The council requested that I advertise the position and so an ad was placed in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. We received 8 enquiries and from that a shortlist of 5 people was drawn up. In the meantime we were most grateful to Margot McLaughlin stepping in to look after the choir until an appointment could be made. After a rigorous set of interviews, auditions and assignments, I am pleased to announce that our new conductor is David Hood. Some biographical information will be published in a later edition of 'Vision'.



For the past four years we have put on a Good Friday afternoon concert and after many requests, this year we will be performing Maunder's 'Olivet to Calvary'. For many decades this work, with Stainer's 'Crucifixion' was performed at St Stephen's and in many churches throughout the English-speaking world. Both works dropped out of fashion when the interest in early music took hold in the 1970s but both are now being revived along with a lot of other Romantic and Victorian music.

This year's performance will be conducted by David and our two soloists are Kent McIntosh (tenor) and Alexander Knight (baritone). We are planning to put together a massed choir once again which will be accompanied by Joshua Ryan and Mark Quarmby. We were most excited to learn that Joshua who is also our organ scholar, has been accepted into the Conservatorium to study a B.Mus in organ.

Back in the 1970s, a lot of work was done on the organ. Much of it was experimental and the project was never completed, leaving the instrument in a state of limbo for over 40 years. One of the incomplete changes was the moving of some pipes over to the right hand side of the church. Where they had been, the organs trumpet pipes were placed but not without severe alterations which included the loss of the twelve biggest pipes and a complete change of tone and volume, leaving it in a very poor musical state.

With the restoration work completed in 2013, many of the pipes on the right hand side were moved back to the left as they kept going out of tune, due to different temperature changes in that corner, which now gets the western afternoon sun. The damaged trumpet pipes had to be removed to allow these other pipes to return to their correct position.

A quote was received for the repair, which was felt to be far too expensive. A second hand rank of Trumpet pipes was known to be available and so they have been purchased and will be installed in the organ this year at considerably less cost than repairing the old ones or buying a brand new set. This Trumpet stop was originally built for a Town Hall in the UK in the 1920s and then ended up in a cathedral organ for several decades until a new instrument was installed and these pipes put into storage for use elsewhere at a future date. We are most grateful to Adriana Degenfeld-Schonburg's most generous bequest for making this work possible.

Mark Quarmby (Director of Music)



From Michelle Maisano

The Smaller Beatitudes

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves;
They will have no end of fun.
Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill;
They will be saved a lot of bother.
Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen;
They will learn a lot of new things.
Blessed are those who can appreciate a smile and forget a frown;
They will walk on the sunny side of the street.
Blessed are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile even
when people interrupt and contradict you or tread on your toes;
The Gospel has begun to seep into your heart.

Anon

The Joy of Teaching

- Dedicated to all the teachers of whom there are many in our membership who can appreciate the frustration!

Then Jesus took his disciples up the mountain and taught them saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are the meek,
Blessed are they that mournetc.

Then Simon Peter asked, "Are we supposed to memorize this?"

Andrew asked, "Do we have to write this down?"

And James asked, "Will we have a test on this?"

And Phillip said, "I don't have any paper"

And Bartholomew asked, "Do we have to hand this in?"

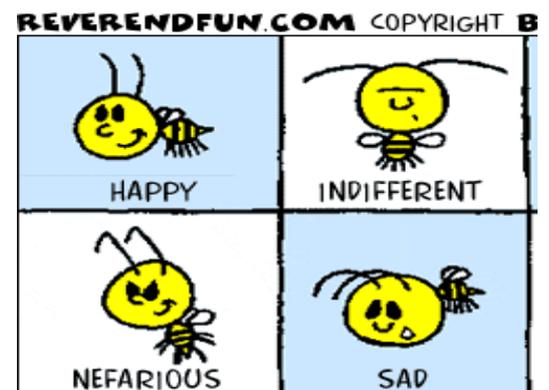
And John complained, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this".

And Matthew said, "May I go to the toilet?"

Then one of the Pharisees who were present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Jesus, "Where is your anticipatory set and your objectives in the cognitive domain?"

And Jesus wept!

The Bee-Attitudes



Confused?



Thanks to Zachary J. Schertz

11-25-2013

Submitted by Michelle Maisano

From What tree did you fall?

Date	Tree	Personality
March 1-10	Weeping Willow	Melancholic; likes to be stress-free; loves family life; musically inclined
March 11- 20	Lime	Doubtful; intelligent, hard-working, tough but always willing to make sacrifices for family and friends
March 21 st	Oak	Courageous; robust nature, strong and brave; feet on the ground; sensible
March 22-31	Hazelnut	Extraordinary; charming, good sense of humour, active fighter for social causes
April 1-10	Rowan	Sensitive; cheerful, gifted, loves life, full of charm without egotism
April 11-20	Maple	Independent mind; full of imagination and originality; ambitious, self-confident
April 21 – 30	Walnut	Full of contrasts; not always liked but often admired; noble, broad horizons
May 1-14	Poplar	Uncertain; looks very decorative; extremely courageous; needs good will
May 15 -24	Chestnut	Honest; of unusual stature; planner, born diplomat, sensitive of others' feelings
May 25-31	Ash	Ambitious; does not care for criticism; needs love and emotional support; restless

Rowan Tree



There has been much concern about our culture of alcohol drinking.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word, 'intoxicated' for 'drunk' has a history that goes back by way of poison to a deadly weapon. A distant root is the Greek word 'toxon', meaning a bow, or bow and arrows (a highfalutin English word for archery is toxophily).

The poison which a Greek archer would use to tip his arrows was 'toxicon pharmakon', a drug for the bow, or simply 'toxicon'.

The Latin form *toxicum* came to mean 'poison' and the Medieval Latin verb *intoxicare* meant 'to put poison into' or 'to poison'. So the English word 'intoxicated' originally meant 'poisoned', and then, specifically 'poisoned by drink' – or just plain drunk.

From "Quaint and Curious"

Poplars



CALENDAR of EVENTS					
MARCH		APRIL		MAY	
4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellowship Meeting – AGM 1.45- Opening of NSW Parliament- special service ** No communion service	1 st	Fellowship - Guest Speaker Joshua Ho Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute	2 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street Stall Friday Music Pat Keith (piano)
5 th	Ash Wednesday – beginning of Lent	4 th	Friday Music- Royal Australian Navy Band - Chamber Ensembles	6 th	Fellowship –Guest speaker Ruth Ponniah On singing with DCINY
7 th	Friday Music- Royal Australian Navy Band – Chamber Ensembles	11 th	Friday Music- Alistair duff-Forbes (violin)	9 th	Friday Music- Pat Keith (chamber music)
14 th	Friday Music- M.Elodie Sablier (piano)	13 th	Palm Sunday Service	16 th	Friday Music- Pat Keith (chamber music)
19 th	Musical Favourites. All are invited	16 th	Musical favourites	21 st	Musical Favourites
21 st	Friday Music- Thomas Talmacs (violin)	17 th	Maundy Thursday	23 rd	Friday Music- Belle Chen (piano)
28 th	Friday Music – Eric Tyson (UK) –organ	18 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Friday Service 2.30 pm- performance of J.H.Maunders’ “From Olivet to Calvary” 	30 th	Friday Music- Callum Close (organ)
30 th	Farewell service – Rev. Dr Ockert Meyer	20 th	Easter – Resurrection Sunday.		
		25 th	ANZAC public holiday. No Friday Music.		

Note: Handcraft Group Working Bee meets every third Tuesday.

St Stephen's Uniting Church
197 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Good Friday 2.30pm
18th April 2014

Olivet to Calvary
J H Maunder

David Hood (conductor)
Kent McIntosh (tenor)
Alexander Knight (baritone)
Mark Quarmby & Joshua Ryan (organists)
Combined Choirs

Programs at the door:
\$25 & \$20 (concession)

Afternoon tea included

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