

SAPPS Music Society Director of Music Annual Report 2020

Who would have thought that in twelve months things could be so different – not better, slightly worse, and really different!!

101 years ago, the Spanish Influenza pandemic cancelled the Festival Concert Series. We weren't about to have that part of history repeat itself, so a new plan was put in place to ensure the public primary school students kept singing!! In 2020 we successfully continued our choral education program and ensured that it still provided a high quality of choral music and Arts opportunities for SA students. Congratulations to **everyone** involved. Through sheer determination and tenacity, creative teamwork and wonderful partnerships, we navigated our way through a very unique year.

".....a huge congratulations to the whole Festival team this year. The movie and the continued outstanding commitment to children's creativity and confidence was amazing." Choir Teacher, Dec 2020.

The 2020 repertoire was ready to go and term 1 began as normal with the two-day conference, then 4 country conferences, 2021 repertoire committee meetings, school cluster visits up until week 7. Then schools began to close their doors keeping visitors out, as COVID-19 became a real threat. The Virus had taken off in Europe and it was on our shores. The PSMF Team crunched some big options and decided to cancel the 2020 Festival Series, and to do SOMETHING else to 'keep the kids singing'!!! With the amazing supporters of our Festival on board – Pepper Tree Media (Nicholas), Jo – Artistic Director (Ding Productions), newbie A. J. (Andrew Johnston) and trusty stage manager Rohan Yates – we 'dreamed big'. We withdrew the commissioned work 'The Space Between Us' and set the revised repertoire list to the 7 remaining songs. With Jo's storyboard of ideas as the starting point, the 'vision' for a movie began to take shape.

A whole new world of working and connecting online began: meetings, rehearsals, making mini video clips containing updates, warm ups, singing tips etc, and 'choir connections' with our teachers and their students in schools. Our 'whiteboard' yearly planner became obsolete and we set up THE Movie planner. Rohan made schedules and more schedules and kept modifying schedules, shifting and adding dates, throughout the filming process.

The filming /recording process on began 27 May with the recording of the piano backing track for Spinning, Spinning at Wizard Tone Studios, and finished up 3 months later on 27 August with the filming of the Sing Tappers at the Adelaide Showgrounds.

Boy oh boy did we go on a steep learning curve, but what an end product to show for it – a Festival of Music Movie!

The PSMF Team are to be admired and congratulated for showing such resilience and creativity this year.

Rachel and Kristin, Irene, Cathy, Anne, Michael, Maria, Adrienne, Chad and Deb - combined we are the 'A' for awesome Team!! Well done everyone 😊

The students really did become the movie "stars" of our program, and are the only ones in history who can brag about making it to the Festival of Music big screen!!

School Choir Teachers, HPI Choir Teachers and Accompanists

We stayed connected online, made visits into schools where possible, and together we all continued 'choir business' with the mantra being 'Sing, sing, sing, sing!' (go on sing it – 🎵 1,3,5,8)

The Music Team

"Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning and focused effort." Paul J. Meyer

Irene has led the team through another very successful year - Congratulations.

Thank you Cathy, Assistant Director of Music, for amazing support, constant smiles and your high work ethic throughout the bumpy year.

To our 3 Festival Accompanists, Felicity Williams, Carol Young and Caroline Pomeroy - thank you for your flexibility, dedication and professionalism to adapt to the new schedules.

Well done Michael McConnochie and the Mass Orchestra conductors: Lisa Johnson, Sue Asser, Katie Williams and Sharon Burgess. Thank you to the wonderful volunteers who assist at weekly orchestra rehearsals.

When rehearsals shut down in term 1 this team also turned to online learning. The playlist was cut and they only rehearsed 4 pieces – Higher Ground, Dance of the Hours, Somebody to Love and The Finale.

Each conductor took on a piece and we moved into Grainger Studio, home of the ASO, for 4 days in August.

What an amazing learning experience this was for our young students. The 4 pieces were workshopped and rehearsed over and over again and they really did reach ‘next level’ – an awesome outcome for these young musicians!

The initial 2020 Repertoire was chosen with less songs due to the earlier concert series in Week 7 and 8.

This worked in our favour when, once the 4 commissioned work songs were removed, the 7 songs settled into “just enough” for schools to continue their choral work.

Each song created a different ‘movie moment’ in different locations with a different ‘dance crew’ to match; it became a movie with spectacular SA vision.

In 2020 we created a different journey of musical growth with unique, long-lasting memories of the Festival in the year of COVID!

The repertoire was reflective again of Australian and local composers and arrangers, Indigenous content, student choice and musical and cultural diversity.

The Festival SING 2020! Movie songs were:

- Raining on the Plains -filmed on location in the Barossa Valley 4 schools with their students
- Cherokee Morning Song - filmed at Ferguson Park with drummers and choreography crew
- Not Perfect - Miss Monday signing and Milana from Klemzig PS helping + choir photos
- Spinning, Spinning - filmed in Elder Park, 3 grand pianos, drone vision – AMAZING!!
- Higher Ground - orchestra played, SAPPS Choir and male ‘vocalists’ recorded
- I’m a Train - animated train vision with input from choirs around the state
- Sing - filmed at The Showgrounds with a tap crew of fine dancers
- The Orchestra also played Somebody to Love, Dance of the Hours and the Finale - filmed and recorded in Grainger Studio and Queens Theatre.

We continued to receive song suggestions from students and teachers as we considered a new repertoire for 2021 – great to have Ben from Kadina ‘TEAM’ into the meetings to help with the process.

To the clever arrangers who put together the orchestrations for us – thank you.

Resources

Recording choirs for the 2020 CDs were The SAPPS Choir and Unley Primary School.

Thanks to staff: Cathy, Gaby, and Susan and their students for outstanding preparation and hard work. Thank you again to Glyn Lehmann for recording and editing, and to Sodypop Studio the recording venue.

All tracks were placed on the brand-new App by Jonny Gorden – and what a super resource it was for 2020 – soprano and alto tracks, echo tracks, tempo moderator, choreography vision, updates, notices and Anzac Day song. The repertoire also sat on the Learning Portal and was available to all teachers and students with a password.

The resources for teachers and students consisted of: teacher notes and extension activities, a printed copy of a PowerPoint for student handouts and activities, and ‘be a detective’ pages in the Songbook. These provided extra learning to connect and engage students with our choral program. Well done Cathy and team.

Conferences

Conference 1 guests included Dan Walker who introduced and taught his commissioned work, The Space Between Us, with exciting insight and musicality.

Elizabeth Vierboom from Sydney Conservatorium High School and Sydney Children’s Choir was our guest choral practitioner who taught us new warm ups and worked with students from Fulham North PS.

Conference 2 was cancelled. Instead we offered several live Facebook Q and A sessions for choir teachers and made small videos to include in the SWAY newsletters and on the website throughout terms 2 and 3.

We ran 2 singing hubs in term 1 and an after school conducting masterclass for choir teachers in term 3.

Cluster visits and Assessments

The cluster rehearsal visits took place between weeks 3 – 7 of term 1 with every Adelaide affiliated school hosting or attending a rehearsal with Robyn or Cathy.

We then shifted to online 'choir connections' for a fair bit of term 2. No assessments, simply checking in, with plenty of encouragement and feedback. Some country choir connections occurred early, and in the final weeks of term 3 Cathy and I drove out to country choirs within 200km of Adelaide to work with students and teachers for 2 hours.

Choirs were encouraged to include more students – offer it to a whole class, or the year 3/4 class – recruit any interested students and have them involved in your choir and the movie and performances in 2020.

Soloists

Local performer, Mark Oates, came in to film a 'soloist tips and tricks' video which we put onto the website, and we encouraged schools to rehearse their soloists for any term 4 choir performances. Cathy and I made special clips for the solo parts for each song.

Troupe and Hosts

Separate troupes were set up for each song - we had the Cherokee Morning Song crew, the Sing crew, the Overture crew, the Somebody to Love crew. Manager, Maria Stone, and her dedicated coordinators worked with Jo and Laura from Ding to prepare each group for their filming commitment. Congratulations!

Thanks to new Host Manager Adrienne, and to Chad and the mentor team for creatively writing scripts and inspiring the 4 talented presenters who featured all through the movie. These students were stars in their own right, making little clips for us to use to provide updates and movie information. They displayed much confidence and professionalism.

Movie Day, Term 3 Wednesday 23 September

Production manager Annie O'Dea recruited a capable team of Movie Managers to coordinate the comings and goings at the Cinemas. All added 'Covid Marshall' to their qualifications for this role.

The day was a huge success – over 15 cinemas were used around the state, over 6,000 students participated – and they watched, moved and SANG!!!!

Regional PSMF

The Saturday country conferences for regional choir teachers in term 1 were held at Monash, Port Pirie, Naracoorte and Cleve. These were well attended, offering 'best practice' ideas, hints and teaching strategies for the new repertoire, opportunities to develop conducting skills and time to learn choreography and Auslan signing.

We attended the Riverland 'Grand Final' performance on 24 August after the 'preliminary final rehearsal', with just their teachers as audience members. 'Not Better, Not Worse, Just Different' was their quote. Cathy attended the upper-Yorke Movie concert, and Irene attended a Holdfast Partnership Concert.

The regional festivals embraced the movie and certainly stepped up to keep their choir students singing - well done!!

Collaborations

The PSMF continues to link itself with other educational and musical bodies:

- Adelaide University: Students continue to be offered 3 sessions of observation at choir and orchestra rehearsals.
- MusicaViva: Their in-schools program is promoted to our teachers at Conference 1 by Emily Kelly and we featured one of their groups at the second day.
- Western Australia Massed Choir Festival: ongoing connections to share project developments and repertoire ideas.
- UNESCO: another likeminded body with very similar strategic pillars for promoting music in the community and with students.
- Children's University continued in 2020.

- The **SAPPS Choir** participated in their own “sing on your doorstep” ANZAC Dawn Service and sang For Love of Country. Students uploaded their individual footage to the department where it was put together for a virtual choir clip.

Professional Development via community concerts and conferences:

- attendance at Gondwana National Choral Lab (as part of the annual national choral school in January),
- meeting with the Catholic Music Festival Team to compare years,
- various online ZOOM Gondwana learning sessions.

♪ Thank you and congratulations to the dedicated and passionate educators in the PSMF family.

♪ In times of uncertainty we have shown resilience and determination to strive for excellence, and have once again provided many opportunities for students in South Australia.

Robyn Filmer
Director of Music