

It's all a beautiful calamitous mess. It's like the day Mr. James took us into the woods and cried triumphantly, "That's it! That's it!" to the dizzying cacophony of soloing instruments trying to make music together. That is it." - Jandy Nelson



## NUC Concerts

May 18, 2pm, Great Hall  
**Do you hear the People Sing!**

Music theatre greats

August 3, 2pm, Great Hall  
**I Remember**  
Commemorating the 100th  
Anniversary of the outbreak  
of World War I.

December 3, 2pm  
Christ Church Cathedral



## Encore

Musical favourites  
from  
Newcastle University Choir

Available from our website  
[www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com](http://www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com)  
or call 4954 8781.

Also for sale at our concerts.

## Quo vadis?



Last year five members of our choir travelled to Rome with the chamber choir, Echology. There they sang in a Mass in the Vatican to celebrate the opening of the International Festival of Sacred Music and art. The Mass was sung by the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir, with a musical interlude by Echology.

They sang a scheduled Mass in St Peter's Basilica, and performed a full program at the Basilica of St

Ignatius. They travelled to Assisi to sing at the Basilica of San Rufino.

Of course they enjoyed the sights of Rome – the Church of St Peter in Chains, Michelangelo's *Moses*, the Arch of Titus, the Arch of Constantine and the Coliseum.

In the Basilica of St Mary Major they attended a joint concert by the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir and the Moscow Synodal Choir supporting the Centre for the Development of Italy-Russia relations. They attended the Vienna Philharmonic's performance of Mozart's *Requiem*.

For Rebecca O'Mara, one of the highlights was a tour of the Vatican museum, including the Sistine Chapel. "Nothing I have ever seen captures the skill of Michelangelo's work ... That night I climbed the 300+ stairs to the top of St Peter's Basilica to enjoy the view... to sing twice opposite the Sistine Chapel Choir in St Peter's will stay in my memory... it was a 'pinch me now, is this really happening?' moment".

I mention this to give you an idea of the opportunities available to choristers. Of course singing in the Vatican may be a one-off experience, but opportunities abound.

Last year, you could have joined choirs to sing Handel's *Messiah* in the Albert Hall, or works by Handel and Adam in Bruges and Ypres. You could have enjoyed a tour of Mallorca with Australian soprano Allegra Giagu, culminating in a concert of sacred music in the basilica at Sanctuary Luc.

This year you can join choirs in Armidale singing Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Chorus Oz singing Rutter's *Gloria* and Durufle's *Requiem* in the Sydney Opera House, and the Sydney University Graduates Choir singing Bowen's *Australian War Requiem* in the Sydney Town Hall.

These events usually draw between 200 and 1000 singers from around the world – an opportunity to participate in creating some wonderful music!

Many of you may remember the Seniors' Choral Festivals held in Newcastle and Sydney in 2006 and 2007. The Principal Conductor was



*The view from St Peter's*

Heather Buchanan, born in Australia, now Professor of Music at Montclair State University in New Jersey. She is leading a tour of Australia in July, when American choristers will perform in the Sydney Opera House and St John's Cathedral in Brisbane. The concerts will feature Morten Lauridsen's *Lux Aeterna* and Australian composer Sarah Hopkins's *Honour the Earth*. Australian singers can join either or both concerts.

Many people hesitate to join a choir because they can't read music. You're not alone – Luciano Pavarotti couldn't read a note. He had to learn it all by heart, which made him rather difficult to work with, but he made good in the end, I believe.

The common misconception is that people who can read music can just pick up a piece and sing it. That is a completely different skill and is called sight reading. The ability to sight-read is by no means something that all professional musicians can do either. Comparatively few professional singers are good sight readers.

The real joy of singing in a choir is in the weeks of rehearsal leading up to a performance – especially when your musical director is also a good teacher. Getting to know the music, meeting people who share your love of music, all for a couple of dollars a week. That's value!

Over time, as you become familiar with the music, you find that you are developing an ability to follow it, even if you can't, maybe never will, understand the difference between an arpeggio and an augmented interval.

Exciting evidence of the plasticity of the brain!

About 18 months ago, Sandra Elms was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She discovered that there was very little support for sufferers of PD in Newcastle, so she decided to do something about it. With the help of the Arts Health Institute she set up a choral group which now meets weekly at Charlestown.

Sandra says "The session starts with warm up breathing exercises and stretches, followed by a dancing singing routine to increase the flexibility of our limbs as well as voices. After that we sing songs and mime

actions to some of the words. It is not what one would call serious singing but the benefits are quite remarkable. Facial expressions have increased, our voices are stronger and more varied, we move more freely and we have all become good friends, so for some people the isolation of the disease is dispelled once a week. It is truly remarkable and I feel proud to have started this venture."

There are many reasons for joining a choir – all of them good!

The Newcastle University Choir meets every Monday night at 7pm in the Great Hall at the University. If you love music, and can hold a tune, you're more than welcome. To find out more, see our website at [www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com.au](http://www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com.au).

Yesterday...



It's fifty years ago that the Beatles appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964.

In 1961, after working in Amsterdam, the group returned to the Cavern Club in Liverpool. Here they met Brian Epstein. He became their manager and refined their act, and introduced them to Decca, who decided that "Groups of guitarists are on the way out" and passed them up.

Epstein took them to Parlophone, a subsidiary of EMI, who, in September 1962 released their first single, *I Want to Hold Your Hand*.

Beatlemania took off in the UK, but the group decided they wouldn't go to the USA until they had a hit there. But EMI just wasn't interested.

Epstein visited the USA in November 1963, where he met Ed Sullivan, who had never heard the group, but on a trip to London had his flight delayed because of them. He had previously missed out on Elvis Presley, so he decided to take a chance.

American media was saturated with Beatle propaganda during January, and after the Ed Sullivan Show the Beatles became a force that changed rock and roll for ever.

*Cacophony* is edited by Peter McCloy on behalf of the Newcastle University Choir, who do not necessarily share the views of the editor. To contribute or to communicate, email us at [newsletter@newcastleuniversitychoir.com](mailto:newsletter@newcastleuniversitychoir.com)

For more about Newcastle University Choir, go to [www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com](http://www.newcastleuniversitychoir.com)