

**February 2007
Newsletter of**

A Kappella Munda



Why AKM Exists ...

To provide an opportunity to sing together in a safe, fun, welcoming, non-judgmental and supportive environment. Come join and stay with us.

Upcoming Events and Other News

**Sunday 25th February -
Fund raising concert for Bushfire
victims at Stirk Park. Be there 3.45pm**

**No choir Saturday, 7th April -
Easter weekend**

**No choir Saturday, 14th April -
Fairbridge Festival weekend**

**Proposed combined concert with
"The Real Sing" - date to be advised**

This issue

- Report on Festival of Perth opening
- W A Opera Studio's "The Magic Flute"
- Bushfire victims Fundraiser

The Return of the Spookies WWWooooo

The Spooky Mens Chorale (which includes our beloved Digby) wow-ed the Brits so much at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last year they have been invited back again in July. If you want to catch them prior to this they will be appearing at the Fairbridge Festival.

A Kappella Munda will perform at 4pm on Sunday 25th February 2007 at the "Out of the Ashes" bush fires benefit concert.

The concert will run from 1-8 pm in Stirk Park, Kalamunda and will involve many local bands, including two youth bands, the FESA band - Red Dog, Indigo Duck and blues and bush bands.

All performers at the concert are donating their time and talent free of charge. Organised by local community radio station KCR, the concert will raise money for families affected by the recent bush fires in Kalamunda, Dwellingup and other WA towns.

Bring a blanket and picnic, your best singing voice and enjoy the local performers and support this very worthwhile cause.

2007 Piaf (not Edith) Overture

Several A Kappella Mundians took the opportunity to join the 400 strong choir for the opening of the Perth International Arts Festival recently and by all reports thoroughly enjoyed the experience. See enthusiastic report from Shirley below ...

"The call to singers far and wide to be involved in the opening of the Perth Festival of Arts was irresistible. The Journey Home Choir came together for several rehearsals prior to Christmas, under the gentle guidance of Prue Ashurst (I think she would smile if she read the word gentle and her name in the same sentence). Nyoongah language and pronunciation taxed us all. Nevertheless we pursued it with vigour and verve. Thank God for the CD. I really must practise.

When Iain Grandage arrived from Sydney for final rehearsals towards the end of January and we realized we were to sing without the manuscript!! It was liberating. Thank God for the CD. I really must practise !

It all came together on the evening of 9th February when approximately 400 enthusiastic and highly tuned performers and Tetrafide, our accompanying percussionists, awaited a sign from Iain, composer and conductor extraordinaire, for the Piaf Overture to begin. Thank God for the CD. I was glad I had practised.

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A Kappella Munda – A Choir of Wonder

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The Nyoongah elders had blessed and cleansed the land, and the audience of several thousand in the Supreme Court Gardens were awaiting our performance with great anticipation.

And they were not disappointed. The music was dynamic and versatile and there was a real sense of occasion. Had there been a roof, we would have lifted it. The audience showed their great appreciation in the usual manner and we retired, elated, to our various families and friends, where, for the fortunate, a picnic involving champagne and smoked salmon appeared.

The Oracle, aka Neville, commented that it was the finest opening performance he had seen. Amazing, incredible, wonderful harmonies... the superlatives flew.

We settled in for our picnic and awaited the main event of the night, Peter and the Wolf, presented by the WA Youth Orchestra and what a delight it was. They had obviously practised! "

Shirley Jackson

A number of choir members enjoy the diversity and pleasure of singing with more than one group. Here Peter shares his experience of his latest performance with Australian Opera Studio.

Mozart's Magic Flute at His Majesty's Theatre December 2006

This production, by the Midland based Australian Opera Studio over 3 nights and 1 matinee, was in every way a highlight of 2006 for me. I was fortunate to be one of 21 singers in the chorus and, even more so, one of the 10 men given the significant role of the male chorus in this opera, with its emphasis on the secretive rites and ceremonies of Freemasonry.

Our work as chorus commenced in late October with weekly rehearsals to learn and memorize the music. That was the easy bit, with such wonderful, tuneful music and a fairly simple English text. Then a couple of weeks before production our Director, Cathy Dadd, from Australian Opera (you may have seen her on ABC TV's Operatunity Oz) came over to start 'putting us into the action' on stage. This is where, at first, you concentrate so hard on your acting that you forget all about the fact that you have to sing as well! It all starts as a bit of a shambles, then bit by bit falls into place and locks in memory. Then, just when you are starting to think you might be able to do this, rehearsals at Midland end and we all move into His Majesty's for the serious final week.

Although we have been practicing on a marked out stage space, the reality of the full set, the huge back-stage area with its mass of lights, ropes, curtains and machinery and, to top it all, costumes, all throw one into confusion again. Once inside this isolated place where, of course, the whole aim is to create another world, we lose all contact with everyday life for hours at a time. For some reason I had great trouble gaining a sense of orientation as to which side of the stage was which (we had to enter from both sides at different times).

The chorus was required to be present each evening and an afternoon as well almost every day during this final week, and all the while as we rehearsed there was a hive of activity as final touches were put to the set, lighting, costumes, entries and exits, etc. A lot of time was spent waiting around for the few minutes of each stage appearance, of course, but that's opera. There's endless fascination watching the continual stream of performer traffic moving on and off stage on cue, often changing costume from one entry to the next. One of the major problems for the chorus was for the men to make a costume change from ruffian slaves to suited gentlemen and re-enter ready to sing again in the space of about 20 bars of music. It was only achieved with the help of the ladies of the chorus holding coats, tying cravats, and so on. Even so, most of us arrived back on stage somewhat dishevelled – but apparently it was not obvious to the audience!

After 4 performances, a huge commitment of time, and a great deal of fun, we decided that although this was not something most of us would want to do for weeks or months on end, it was a hugely satisfying achievement and a great privilege to be part of it, especially so with such talented soloists, conductor and director.

This year the Studio will be performing Verdi's La Traviata, again at His Majesty's, at the beginning of December. This opera also involves considerable chorus work and will be sung in Italian, making the memorizing that much harder. Before that there are semi-staged performances of an early Mozart opera, Kurt Weill's "The Threepenny Opera" and Puccini's "La Rondine" all at the Studio in Midland.

Peter Day