



## WELCOME

*What a way to wrap up our 60th year – an absolutely ‘thrilling’ concert with 200 singers, a 50-piece orchestra, and the wonderful Graham Abbott, Lorina Gore, Christopher Saunders and Christopher Richardson. And of course the glorious music of Haydn!*

*I hope that the photos, messages and quotes in this newsletter help you to relive the joy of that night. If you want even more, make sure you read the City News review if you haven’t already, and check out Graham Abbott’s words on his blog (see link below).*

*See also the message from Alison for key dates for the beginning of 2013.*

*All Creation guest choristers will be automatically added to our ongoing mailing list so that you hear first about our concerts next year, and of course, the opportunities to join us again for Carmina Burana (with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra), and our Come and Sing Handel’s Messiah.*

*In the meantime, I hope your festive season is safe, joyful and full of wonderful music!*

*Yours in music  
Kelly Corner, CCS Publicity Officer*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

First of all I want to wish you all a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year. 2012 has been a vibrant year for CCS with some really wonderful concerts behind us and lots of new activities in the pipeline. As President I have had the pleasure of getting to know you all better and of working closely with Toby and the Committee who have all worked extraordinarily hard to make the year a great success.

### 60th birthday

One of the highlights of the year was the 60th birthday party. Julie Lee and the organising committee have put together a lovely book with photos of the night plus all the speeches that were given. I know that many of you will want a copy of this and it is available to you online at

<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/21024138/60%20Years%20of%20Singing.docx>. All you need to do is click on this link and wait while the document downloads; it will take a while because it is quite large with many photos.

### Creation CDs and scores

Creation was a resounding success and you can now relive the concert through the CD, which has been sent to all guest choristers. Other pre-ordered copies are being distributed from The Silk Road Gallery, at 19 Kennedy St Kingston, open 10 to 4 pm, 7 days a week. Thanks to Kelly and Hou for offering to do this. The CD is \$15 (cash only, correct change please.)

If you want to buy a score of Creation (Oxford Edition), it is available for purchase from Zephyr Music (02) 9439 8900 or online from [www.thebookdepository.co.uk](http://www.thebookdepository.co.uk) for a slightly cheaper rate. Delivery is prompt and postage is free from this British online book store, which I use regularly.

### Auditions and singing lessons

At our final committee meeting for the year last night we had much to discuss about the future direction of CCS. While the auditions have been a taxing time it is important to remember that every major auditioned choir goes through this process every two years. If we are to maintain our reputation as the premier choral group in Canberra we too have to undergo the agony and for Toby it is really important that he has heard each individual voice. Remember that every one of you is still a member of the choir and for those of you who have been asked to take singing lessons (and that is most of us!), you will be interested to know that Toby is currently negotiating with Christina Wilson and Louise Page to give small group lessons. He will also be compiling a list of singing teachers to send out to everyone in January.

### Future projects

The first rehearsal for our new youth choir, New Voices, will take place on Wednesday 6 February. We have an ArtsACT grant for this exciting project and there will be a workshop at Belconnen Arts Centre on the weekend of

13-14 April with an extraordinary vocal musician, Mal Webb which we hope will attract many enthusiastic young singers. Rachael Eddowes and I will be sending out some publicity about this in the new year and I really urge you to send it on to any young adults you know aged 16-26 or their parents.

Toby will also be starting up an elite choir of 25 singers known as Clarion. Singers will be invited to join this choir and they will come together for two concerts in 2013, one of them being Theodora where they will be the heathens while CCS will be the Christians!

So these new projects, along with our regular program of concerts, plus *Carmina Burana* with the CSO, the CIMF and the final Come and Sing *Messiah*, all mean that 2013 will be a really exciting, challenging and demanding year. Toby has a great vision for choral music in Canberra and the committee supports him in his vision. This will mean demands on our finances and tight budgeting. However, if we can provide really original and creative high-quality performances for Canberra audiences, our audience base

[jenny.landsberg@bigpond.com](mailto:jenny.landsberg@bigpond.com). And of course please consider whether you would be willing to nominate for committee. It is very rewarding and a way of contributing not just to the choir itself but also to the musical life in Canberra. If you don't wish to stand for election we are always looking for volunteers for off-committee roles. Many people working in these roles have been doing so for a very long time and I'm sure they would appreciate a break or at least extra support.

Finally a few words of thanks to Toby for being such an inspiring teacher and conductor and for taking us on exciting artistic journey, and to all of the committee and off-committee members who put in hours and hours of hard work to make each concert run so smoothly.

I wish you all a great festive season and I look forward to seeing you all again on 3 February for the afternoon tea and AGM. Rehearsals will start on 4 February and we will be straight into Great Performances at the Albert Hall with guest appearances from Dame Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Joan Sutherland and other divas!



will hopefully grow and with an Artistic Director as talented, energetic and creative as Toby there is every chance of this happening.

### **Pot luck afternoon tea and AGM**

We will be having a pot luck afternoon tea and AGM on Sunday 3 February, 3pm-5pm at St John's, Reid. Julie Lee who has done such a wonderful job in organising the pot luck dinners is very sadly leaving the choir to rehearse with the Hall Village Band on Monday nights and so it was felt that an afternoon tea would be easier to organise without Julie's expert help. Jenny Landsberg is organising and will be calling for volunteers. If you are able to help please email me or Jenny at

*Alison*

### **HAYDN'S CREATION**

Put on your CD, sit back and relive the concert as you peruse this collection of words and photograph...

### **From Graham Abbott**

Graham wrote several entries about our Creation on his blog, and they make fascinating reading, especially for those of us who were part of it. Here's an extract from his description of the performance itself:

It was simply an amazing night, a stupendously exciting performance of a stupendous masterpiece. The choir and orchestra performed with overwhelming power when I demanded it of them, and the effect was electrifying, just as the reports of the first performances in the 1790s described. "The heavens are telling" had me close to tears, and "The Lord is great" took the roof off.

Yet the choir's hushed, barely audible sounds of awe in the great Hymn of Part 3 (at "Forever blessed be his pow'r") were spine-chilling as well.

There were moments of pure delight and delicacy, especially from the orchestra during the arias. Haydn's writing for the woodwinds is a gift from start to finish and the players were wonderful. And of course the soloists (Lorina Gore, Christopher Saunders and Christopher Richardson) were just right for the piece, singing with style and poise and accuracy and beauty.

Graham's blog is at [grahamabbottsstuff.blogspot.com.au](http://grahamabbottsstuff.blogspot.com.au). Just scroll down or look in the November and December archives to find The Creation Files 1-7.

And here's a personal note from Graham which he

wrote to us for this newsletter.

There are times when the little words "thank you" can seem so inadequate, and this is certainly one of them. Having the chance to share Haydn's masterpiece with the CCS was one of those events in which no matter how much I felt I gave, I always got back more in return. The whole lead up over the three days of rehearsals was extraordinary as we - the choir and I - rapidly got used to each other and trusted each other to go out on a limb and dare to share this extraordinary journey together. The result at the concert was electrifying, and I don't need to tell you we went on one heck of a journey!

This would not have been possible without Toby's



meticulous preparation of the choir. So many times I come into a situation like this with knife-edge rehearsal time available and have to spend precious time teaching things which should have been covered before my arrival. Not once did I have to do that for this concert, not once. I made suggestions about text, expression, dynamics and tempo (the sorts of things which have to wait until my arrival), but I never had to stop and teach the music. I can't overstate how much difference that makes, and how much that makes it possible for us to have a great performance as opposed to just a good one.

Another factor which made this performance special was that I never for one second had the impression that anyone on the stage - singer or instrumentalist - wanted to do anything but give a great performance. I never sensed anyone wasn't a team player, wasn't willing to take risks, or wasn't willing to give 100%. The fact that we all left the stage walking on air (yes, I felt it too!) proves it, and that made the occasion "click" for the audience. I mean, you heard the reaction!

Thank you for having me, thank you for giving me one of the great experiences of my career, and thank you for doing Haydn proud.

*Graham Abbott*

### From our soloists

And two lovely messages from our two Christophers!

As 2012 draws to a close and the festive season being upon us I've had time to reflect on the past year. It has been a hectic year for many and this certainly applies to me. To be honest, I would rather forget 2012 for many reasons and am looking forward to a fresh 2013!

I would sincerely like to thank you all for your passion and

commitment in the recent performance of Haydn's Creation. This performance was a highlight of the year for me and I was touched by your welcoming warmth and open hearts. I was also impressed with all your singing and hard work which made the music soar and stun the audience in Canberra. I could see the audience very clearly and their smiling expressions said it all. It was such an uplifting experience.

So thank you all and I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas with time to rest and reflect too. I also hope 2013 is a great year for you all!

*With love, Chris [Saunders]*

☺

Just a quick note to say how privileged and ecstatic I felt to be part of our recent performance together of Haydn's 'Creation'! Thank you for your warm hospitality, smiles, beautiful choral sounds (with fantastic intonation!) and encouragement along the way.

As the more 'green' soloist of the three (how great were Christopher S and Lorina eh?!) - I feel very grateful to your wonderful musical director - Tobias Cole - for entrusting the huge bass soloist role to me (after having heard me in a singing competition back in 2010), and also for his very helpful coaching during our exceedingly short rehearsal period leading up to the performance!

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and New Year, and look forward to working with you all again sometime in the (hopefully) not-too-distant future!!

Cheers and thanks again

*Chris [Richardson]*



Lorina Gore



Christopher Saunders



Christopher Richardson

## And from our choristers

We also received many lovely comments from CCS members and guest choristers. Here's a selection.

*I was in the car a few months ago listening to ABC 666 when you [Tobias Cole] issued a seemingly cavalier invitation to any member of the public to join the CCS for the Creation as a guest chorister. Never having sung in public before, I ignored my doubts and signed up as a tenor (although bass may have been more appropriate but what did I know then?).*

*I want to sincerely thank you for providing a wonderful and memorable experience for me. I enjoyed every rehearsal, learnt a lot and felt remarkably safe and confident being flanked by the Gill boys and long time CCS members Simon and Peter. You were inspiring and Graham Abbott was terrific.*

*I found the final evening with the great orchestra and fabulous soloists remarkably moving and joyous.*



*Just wanted to say what a great idea the Come Sing program is. I'm a mother of 4 kids, part time maths teacher and I live on a property 30mins out of town. I haven't sung in a choir since primary school and I've been a bit lost in the world of running my kids to all their things for the last 17 years!! I joined the CCS program a bit tentatively, wondering how I'd go. I've had such an absolutely fabulous time and Saturday night was a completely heavenly moment in time. Thanks for doing a great job of teaching us to sing. It was such a privilege to learn a beautiful piece of music so well and the whole experience was uplifting and refreshing to a degree I couldn't have imagined. I forgot how much I love to sing and to sing in such a large group, with the orchestra, being confident I knew my part was a real joy.*



*Three days on, and I am still on a high. Thanks to you and Tobias and the committee for a great guest chorister experience with CCS.*



*What a wonderful experience last night was. I am so grateful to be able to join in. I still haven't come down to earth. A big thank you to all regulars for the support and encouragement. Of course that goes for Tobias too.*

*I look forward to next year with enthusiasm!*



*My thanks to everyone who made it possible for me to be involved in such a CREATION! It was a privilege to be part of it and I have enjoyed every minute of the experience. Graham was a wonderful conductor, his love of the music shining through every note, and soloists and orchestra were superb. But my*

*special thanks go to Toby who made every rehearsal a joy and taught us so much.*

*I must apologise for my husband, who stood up as the last note died away and clapped and cheered and stamped and whistled! He pronounced it a triumph. [No need to apologise! Ed.]*

*Down to earth today and already looking forward to your next 'Come and Sing'.*



*it was a fantastic experience being a "guest". CCS did everything really well, made us feel a real part of your choir. The teaching from Toby and Graham I really appreciated – added to my fairly limited musical knowledge.*

*I'll be back next year!*



*A great concert and I very much enjoyed the quality of the conductor, the soloists and the orchestra (especially as my daughter was in the orchestra)!*



*I would like to thank you for the wonderful opportunity to be with such talented people. It was a magic night that I will not forget.*



*My 4 friends whom I coerced to come said that it was an awe-inspiring experience and they were in tears !!!*

*I have 3 people now who want to come and join us for the Messiah next year ( as well as me!!!).*



*I want to thank you and the team who made this event possible for the fantastic experience I've had, culminating in Saturday's wonderful performance. Throughout the rehearsals I've been impressed not only by the musicality, dedication and high standards of Tobias and the choir, but also by the excellent organisation and communication of everyone associated with the production. I enjoyed it immensely and would love to be part of next year's productions.*



*It was an absolute joy to be part of such a wonderful occasion and to realise that all the hard work paid off!! Even the hard work was fun and fabulous. Thanks to all the Choral Society members who made the guests so welcome.*



*As for the magic evening, I am still in a state of semi-elation, although the Saturday was my real emotional breaking pint. After getting off the stage, I had to sit down, because my knees were shaking, I had to leave the rehearsal room because I was ready to burst in tears. I let them flow in the foyer in front of mine and*



*my daughter's-in-law family. That has never happened to me before!*



*The evening was fantabulous.... I have had many friends and acquaintances telling me how much they enjoyed the concert - the adjectives are flowing freely, some of which have not heard for many years.*



*And yes, utter thanks to Tobias for all his hard work in preparing us for the performance. He had to be innovative and creative, and however he did it, the choir really sounded like one entity rather than 4 groups singing their bits. So tons of Kudos to him.*



*it was a wonderful evening - so restful to listen to the orchestra and soloists and so exhilarating to sing in the choruses. I count it a huge privilege to be able to sing with you.*



*The whole experience of being a guest singer has been wonderful.*

*Apart from the pleasure of learning to sing with such a large choir it is a real pleasure to be a guest in such a well organised professional organisation*



*I've just spoken to a friend in Sydney who scolded me for not inviting her for Sat night!! (she NEVER comes to visit - all too hard etc)*



*Thank you and what a wonderful experience. Friends of mine who were there were blown away even those who*

*had never been to such an event commented "Do you have any idea what you sound like or to sit in the audience and hear it?" They are still elated and talking about it and from the look on their faces I think the performance gave them a taste of the angels in heaven.*



*Agree that last night was absolutely fabulous and so exhilarating – one of the best concerts we have ever done, I think!*



*As a 'guest' for the second time, may I again say thank you to CCS for inviting us to join you – it's certainly been a very memorable experience for me, as I've loved it both times. I am really hoping I can join you again. I couldn't face an audition, so won't try for the CSS, but as a guest I feel really welcome.. The enthusiasm of everyone is extremely contagious and it's been a really positive experience.*

*The feedback from friends has been wonderful – they are all jealous they weren't able to join in!*



*What a truly memorable experience! I still haven't come down from the high (still up there with Gabriel and Uriel!!)*



*... It was a real privilege and all the dozen or so people we invited really enjoyed it*



*Thanks to all of you for the great organisation of this event. It was very rewarding – such a beautiful work and a wonderful opportunity to participate.*



*I have had a fabulous time as a guest chorister and am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of such an amazing experience. The Creation is a beautiful work and a joy to sing.*

*Everyone helped make this a memorable experience. All the CCS members I interacted with were friendly and helpful and enhanced my enjoyment of the event. Toby and Graham were amazing. Graham made me feel special, as I am sure he did all choristers, without me ever having a personal interaction with him. A great interpersonal talent.*



*...it was a great success. I have had quite experienced musicians/choristers who attended tell me that it was the 'best choral performance they had heard in years!'*

## THE LAST WORD ON 2012

To finish off a wonderful 2012, we received this glowing mention from Ian Warden in his Year in Review article in the Canberra Times

([www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/big-tales-from-a-growing-city-20121230-2c1hq.html#ixzz2GgenC9CS](http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/big-tales-from-a-growing-city-20121230-2c1hq.html#ixzz2GgenC9CS)):

*On my 10-point Pride-in-Canberra scale, it was a musical event, the **Canberra Choral Society's** production of Handel's opera/oratorio **Saul** in St Andrew's cathedral-sized church in Forrest, that scored the only perfect 10 of 2012. Gang-Gang the cockatoo promoted the production with feather-ruffling zeal. It was plucky of Canberran Tobias Cole and the Society to stage something so poorly known (putting the cautious CSO to shame), the production itself bristled with excellence, Cole (who talks to his audiences, bless him) was engaging, the church (a Canberra church) was a magnificent setting with the late afternoon Canberra light (the best light in the world) streaming in through stained glass. The afternoon was an occasion of overwhelming excellence and loveliness, and absolutely everything about its excellence and loveliness (save, of course, for Handel's modest contribution of his melodic masterpiece) was Canberran. Gang-Gang, a proud Canberran, gave the occasion a perfect 10.*

Just a few days later, when reflecting on the 'sterility' of another (non-musical) event, Ian had this to say:

*Funnily enough in modern classical music performances (which at first you'd imagine are bound to be a stuffy contrast to a Citycruise) these are the very barriers that are being broken down all the time now. These days the Canberra Symphony Orchestra's concerts, in this blessed era, are wonderfully engaging occasions. So are musical director Tobias Cole's performances with the Canberra Choral Society of Handel's oratorios. Cole (this columnist's 2012 Canberran of the Year) even gives his audiences a chance to join in and sing a little. Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/civic-drool-time-all-too-brief-20130103-2c729.html#ixzz2H9xnTgPD>*

A wonderful ending to a wonderful year!

Photo credits:

p1: Albert Hall Festival photo by Hou Leong  
pp2-6: Creation photos by Peter Hislop