

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST
OF AUSTRALIA

Report by:

Mrs Sandra Milliken, 2001 Churchill Fellow

To enhance skills in choral methodology and organisational management
as they apply to community choirs for youth and women.

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INTRODUCTION

In August 2000, I was both honoured and delighted to be the recipient of a Churchill Fellowship that enabled me to pursue an overseas study program in five countries – England, Finland, Sweden, the United States of America and Canada. During the four month long journey, I visited 56 choirs and liased with internationally renowned conductors, educators and administrators; observed many hours of choir rehearsals, concerts and recording sessions; and listened to and researched new choral repertoire.

The opportunity to travel to different countries, to experience variety of languages and cultures, and to combine this with my love of choral music, was an opportunity of a lifetime. It helped me to develop a deeper appreciation of the work of my choral-conducting colleagues both overseas and in Australia.

I would like to sincerely thank the Churchill Trust for providing me with the means and the opportunity to gather the knowledge needed to further enhance my skills in choral pedagogy, conducting and now, composing. I am most grateful that the Churchill Trust is able to provide these fellowships to Australians each year, irrespective of their age. For me at the age of 39 (and now 40), there was very little other prospect of ever pursuing overseas study on a funded basis. I am very proud to join the number of Australians who are honoured as Churchill Fellows and I aim to promote the organisation through my own professional example and the desire to further enhance the choral music scene using the knowledge I gained through the Churchill experience.

I was also very pleased. as a Churchill Fellow 2001 and ambassador, to be allowed the opportunity to promote public awareness of the Churchill Trust during my overseas travels and especially in England, where I gave two radio interviews, one being with BBC Nottingham.

The experiences gained as a result of the Churchill Fellowship program have provided me with newfound creativity. After being significantly inspired by the very high levels of expertise in choral singing and vocal tone, particularly in Finland and Sweden, I decided to move into the area of composition. My return to Australia has seen the completion of two choral works for women's choir, several poems and more choral compositions in progress.

The Churchill Fellowship has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and the impetus to make significant contributions to Australian choral music in the future. I sincerely thank all the people who made this special achievement possible, and I look forward to bringing many more years of service to the Australian music community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: To enhance skills in choral methodology and organisational management as they apply to community choirs for youth and women.

The Churchill Fellowship enabled me to travel to England, Finland, Sweden, Canada and the United States of America, observing a large number of internationally renowned choirs and their conductors. The choirs that formed the initial program were selected on the basis of their innovative approach to choral performance, their choral/vocal pedagogy and their outstanding contribution to choral music worldwide.

In England, I was very fortunate to meet two people in particular who demonstrated their leadership in attaining quality choral tone through vocal techniques and training programs. **Pamela Cook** of *Cantamus* shared her expertise in developing vocal tone and support mechanisms in girls' voices. *Cantamus* is claimed to be one of the world's best girls' choirs, in which the variety of vocal tone is an aspect of primary importance in the integrity of choral music performance. The *Cantamus* training program ensures that a sound vocal technique is taught right from the initial learning stages. Their motto focuses on "Belief" in the individual. The *National Youth Choir of Great Britain (NYCGB)*, an outstanding youth choir that regularly tours the world under the direction of **Mike Brewer**, also runs a successful vocal program which produces a flow-on effect through the organisation of a Training Choir, a Senior Choir to the ages of 22 years, and finally a chamber choir – *Laudibus*. Mike works on the principles of relating gesture (including conducting gesture and body language), descriptive images and healthy vocal technique to produce stunning choral results. The NYCGB is supported by a team of vocal specialists who work to achieve both individual and ensemble excellence. My time was well spent observing rehearsals at the 10-day NYCGB choral camp. Mike Brewer's new publication on warm-ups and vocal technique will be welcomed by many in the choral scene.

Kari Ala-Polänen, the director of the *Tapiola* Choir in Espoo, Finland, provided me with an insight into the team-playing strategies that have had such a strong influence on the development of this outstanding children's choir in terms of the nurturing of the personal and spiritual growth of its members. The choir fosters a very high level of ownership and personal responsibility, which produces a strong sense of group cohesion, goal and focus. Kari's philosophy for creating and developing a sense of team spirit and cooperation within the choir is also highly sought after by commercial companies. Whilst in Finland, I had the opportunity to research modern Finnish repertoire at **SULASOL**, a company that performs an integral role in the development and success of the Finnish choral music environment. The company coordinates and promotes several music organisations (The Association of Youth Choirs, Orchestral Association & Women's Choir Association) and also publishes new works with a choral music focus. **Reijo Kekkonen** provided me with the appropriate resources, which enabled me to gain a further cultural understanding of Finnish music in general. Several Finnish choral conductors including **Marjukka Riihimäki** of *Philomela* Women's Choir, **Professor Matti Hyokki**, **Timo Nuroanne** and **Timo Lehtovaara** (the latter three conductors from the *Sibelius Academy*) were invaluable sources of information on conducting techniques and repertoire – including new choral works – and all demonstrated a deep, personal connection with the spirit of music performance, an aspect that is difficult to describe in a succinct style. I was especially impressed with the professional level of choral singing, the standard of intonation and the resultant variety of choral tone – an inherent language characteristic.

In Sweden, I had the pleasure of meeting with conductor **Eric Ericsson**, known as the "Father of Swedish choral music". His reputation as a leader in the advancement of new choral music performance and the commissioning of new works by Swedish composers, and his expertise in choral conducting technique makes him one of the most reputable choral conductors in the world today. At 82 years, it was an honour to see him conduct the *Eric Ericsson Chamber Choir* and to see, first-hand, examples of the choral methodology that have made him famous. I also had a rewarding session on the finer points of choral conducting with **Professor Stephan Parkman** in Uppsala. **Robert Sund** was an excellent source of choral warm-up materials through my observation of rehearsals with the male choir *Orphei Dranger* and the *Uppsala Music School Choir*. **Bo Johansson's** choral pedagogy and team strategies in the *Adolph Fredrik's Girls Choir* are also worth mentioning. The Swedish choral tone has long been a subject of debate, but here again the language plays an integral role in the melodious lilt of the choral music. I heard the most amazingly difficult choral works in Sweden, music written with an athletic expectation of the voice and pushing choral music to the limit in terms of aural perception and technique.

In Canada, I was able to further advance my knowledge of new women's choir repertoire by liaising with the *Elektra* Women's choir, co-directed by **Morna Edmundson** and **Diane Loomer**. In Palo Alto, California, I was delighted to meet with **Dr Patty Hennings** whose community-minded philosophy helped develop her choir, *The Peninsula Women's' Chorus*, from a group of local singers to a national choir. Patty's enthusiasm and dynamic presence were the guiding spirit of her choir and for others who met her. With the motto that "Music is community, community of heart and soul and voice!" (Ron Jeffers) this choir has led the way in promoting innovative creative arts programs through the commissioning of new choral repertoire. The **AmericaFest International Women's Singing Festival** held in Seattle, Washington, was the final event and the culmination of my choral journey. What a fitting finale – women's and girls' choirs brought from all over the world, to form a massed choir of 500 voices, to perform a specially commissioned work and to be directed by world class conductors. It was a very rewarding conference where the meeting of knowledge, expertise and spirit was shared for the betterment of participants. As the only Australian representative at this conference, my developing professional network expanded into the possibility of Australia hosting the next AmericaFest Women's International Singing Festival! The Churchill Fellowship has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and the impetus to make significant contributions to Australian choral music in the future.

PROGRAM 2001

- 25-03-01
Travel: Brisbane to London via Singapore
- 26-03-01
Travel: London to Mansfield (outside Nottingham)
Meet Sheila Haslam, Administrator of Cantamus Girls Choir
- 27-03-01
Meeting with Cantamus staff – Pamela Cooke (conductor), Anne Irons (conductor), Elaine Guy (Vocal Tutor) and Joy Macnicol (Vocal Tutor).
- 28-03-01
Travel to Birmingham
Meet Mike Brewer, Conductor of The National Youth Choir of Great Britain
Attend rehearsals of City of Birmingham Children's Chorus, Senior Girls Chorus and City of Birmingham Symphonic Choir with conductor Simon Halsey.
- 29-03-01
Travel to Southwell
Meeting with Paul Hale, Oxford Scholar and Music Rector of Southwell Minster Cathedral Choir
Attend and observe Boys choir rehearsal and Evensong sung service.
Attend and observe Cathedral Choir rehearsal for Passion Sunday.
- 30-03-01
Research voice training resources with Pamela Cooke
Attend and observe Cantamus group voice lessons
Attend and observe Cantamus Girls Choir Main Choir rehearsal
- 31-03-01
Attend Cantamus CD launch in Mansfield
Attend concert in Grantham: Verdi Requiem
- 1-04-01
Observe rehearsal of Cantamus Training Choir in Blidworth
Attend Concert of Cantamus Training Choir in Blidworth
- 2-04-01
Radio Interview Recording: Radio for the Blind - Churchill Fellowship program
Meeting with Michael Neaum (arranger/composer/accompanist – Cantamus Choral Series)
- 3-04-01
Meeting with Jane McDouall (conductor) Nottingham Youth Chamber Choir, and Arik Prentice (accompanist) – Nottingham Choral Trust
Attend and observe rehearsal Nottingham Youth Chamber Choir
Conduct/workshop on Australian choral work with choir
- 4-04-01
Interview on BBC Nottingham Radio with Andrew David re Churchill Fellowship
Meeting with Angela Kay and Angela Smallwood – Nottingham Choral Trust
Attend and observe rehearsal of East of England Singers
Conduct/workshop on Australian choral work with choir
- 5-04-01
Singing lesson with Pamela Cooke
Watch promotional choral videos, browse through choral archives
- 6-04-01
Conduct a warm-up session with Cantamus Main Choir
Attend and observe Cantamus rehearsal
- 7-04-01
Travel: Mansfield to London
- 8-04-01
Attend and observe rehearsal Laudibus Chamber Choir conducted by Mike Brewer
- 9-04-01
Repertoire research at Boosey and Hawkes
Attend and observe rehearsal St John's Smith Square: Laudibus with chamber orchestra
Attend Sung Evensong with Westminster Cathedral Choir
Attend concert of St Matthew's Passion – Bach

10-04-01
Travel: London to Birmingham

11-04-01
Travel: Birmingham to Windemere
Attend National Youth Choir of Great Britain Easter Training Camp conducted by Mike Brewer

12-04-01
National Youth Choir of Great Britain Easter Training Camp – Choir rehearsals
Attend private voice lessons of Voice Tutors

13-04-01
NYCGB Training Camp – Choir rehearsals
Private voice Lessons

14-04-01
NYCBG Training Camp – Choir rehearsals
Private voice Lessons

16-04-01
NYCGB Training Camp – Choir rehearsals

17-04-01
NYCGB Training Camp – Choir rehearsals
Travel: Windermere to Brighton

18-04-01
Travel: Brighton to Seaford
Attend 4th International Choral Workshop
Sessions with Oscar Escalada (Argentina), Jesper Grøve Jørgenson (Denmark), Roy Wales (England)
Conducting lesson

19-04-01
Sessions at International Choral Workshop
Conducting lesson
Spanish and German language classes

20-04-01
Sessions at International Choral Workshop
Conducting lesson
Singing lesson with Margaret Field
Italian and French language classes

21-04-01
Sessions at International Choral Workshop
Selected to conduct the International Workshop Choir for concert at St Leonard's Church

22-04-01
Final sessions at International Choral Workshop
In-house concert
Travel to Brighton

24-04-01
Travel: Brighton to Heathrow
Travel: London to Helsinki (Finland)

25-04-01
Attend Sibelius Academy of Music conducting auditions (paid Chamber Choir) for 2002
Meet Matti Hyökki (professor of conducting) and Timo Nuoranne (conducting lecturer)
Attend rehearsal of Suomen Laulu Chamber Choir conducted by Timo Nuoranne

26-04-01
Attend rehearsal of Sibelius Academy Chamber Choir at Helsinki Cathedral
Attend rehearsal of Finnish Radio Choir at Yleisradio Oy-Nuotisto conducted by Timo Nuoranne
Attend concert of Cantabile conducted by Passi Hyökki

27-04-01
Meet with Timo Lehtovaara (conducting lecturer)
Lecture on Australian Choral Music at the Sibelius Academy for Music Education Students
Tour of the Academy facilities
Attend CD Recording session Sibelius Academy Chamber Choir at Helsinki Cathedral

30-04-01
Meeting with Reijo Kekkonen (Sales and Publication Manager SULASOL)
Full day researching repertoire at Suomen Laulajain ja Soittajain Liitto ry (SULASOL)

- 1-05-01
May Day holiday
- 2-05-01
My birthday.
Member of the jury for conducting exams at the Sibelius Academy
Repertoire research continued at SULASOL
- 3-05-01
Meet with Eric-Olaf Soderström
Attend opera at Oopera House: Wozzeck
Attend and observe rehearsal Tapiola Children's Choir conducted by Kari Ala-Polänen
- 4-05-01
Attend conducting classes at Sibelius Academy of Music Töölönkatu – Timo Nuoranne
Meet with Marjukka Riihimäki
Attend and observe rehearsal of Philomela Women's Choir conducted by Marjukka Riihimäki
- 5-05-01
Meeting with Marjukka Riihimäki
Conduct warm-ups with Philomela prior to concert
Attend Sibelius Academy Doctoral Concert: Choirs included Kampin Laulu, and NonStop Vocal Ensemble
- 7-05-01
Meeting with Tapiola Choir Staff: Heli Lämpi (administrator), Kari Ala-Polänen (conductor) and Erkki Pohjola (founding director/conductor)
Meeting with Leena Lenkkeri, administrator of Candomino Chamber Choir
Attend and observe rehearsal of Candomino Chamber Choir conducted by Tauno Saatoma
- 8-05-01
Repertoire research continued at SULASOL
Attend conducting lessons at Sibelius Academy – Timo Nuoranne
Attend and observe rehearsal of Sibelius High School Chamber Choir conducted by Marjukka Riihimäki
Attend and observe rehearsal Kampin Laulu Chamber Choir conducted by Timo Lehtovaara
- 9-05-01
SULASOL
Attend and observe workshop conducted by Marjukka Riihimäki with visiting Japanese Girls Choir
Meeting with Principal of Sibelius High School, visiting Japanese VIP's and Marjuka Riihimäki
Attend and observe rehearsal Galante Youth and Children's Choir conducted by Jani Sivén at Helsingin Konservatorio
Attend and observe rehearsal Suomen Laulu conducted by Timo Nuoranne
- 10-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal of The Finnish National Opera Chorus conducted by Eric-Olaf Söderstrom
Attend and observe rehearsal of Tapiola Children's Choir -Tapiola
Observe choristers' private lessons with vocal tutor – Marie Grönholm
Discussion with Heli Lämpi, administrator of Tapiola Children's Choir
- 11-05-01
Attend concert at Temppeliaukion Kirkko - Mijagiken Daisan Joshi High School Choir conducted by Kanezo Kori and Sibelius High School Chamber Choir conducted by Marjukka Riihimäki
- 13-05-01
Attend Ylioppilaskunnan Laulajat (Helsinki University Chorus OR YL) Concert – doctoral concert conducted by Matti Hyökki
Meet Anders Eby – Swedish Choral Professor
- 14-05-01
Travel: Helsinki to Stockholm (Sweden)
- 15-05-01
Attend rehearsal of Stockholm Musikgymnasium Chamber Choir conducted by Gary Graden
Discussion with conductor Gary Graden
Mikaeli Chamber Choir Concert conducted by Anders Eby
- 16-05-01
Kungilga Musikhogskolan – attended diploma student conducting classes
Professor Anders Eby

Attend and observe rehearsal of Adolf Fredrik's Girls Choir at Adolf Fredrik's School conducted by Bo Johansson
Attend and observe rehearsal of St Jacob's Church Chamber Choir conducted by Gary Graden
17-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal of Sjorkvist Chamber Choir conducted by Prof Gustaf Sjorkvist
18-05-01
Travel to Uppsala
Attend performance of The Fairy Queen by Purcell at the University of Uppsala conducted by Professor Stephan Parkman
21-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal and concert of Uppsala Musikclasses Chamber Choir Concert conducted by Robert Sund
Conducting Lesson with Professor Stephan Parkman at Uppsala University
Attend and observe rehearsal of the Akademiska Kammerkor at Uppsala University conducted by Professor Stephan Parkman.
22-05-01
Travel Uppsala to Stockholm
Attend and observe rehearsal Eric Ericsson's Chamber Choir at the Radiohuset conducted by Eric Ericsson
23-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal of Swedish Radio Choir at the Radiohuset conducted by Tonu Kaljuste
24-05-01
Public Holiday
28-05-01
Attend and observe recording session at Berwaldhallen of Swedish Radio Choir and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tonu Kaljuste
Attend and observe rehearsal of Adolf Fredrik's Girls Choir conducted by Bo Johansson
Meeting/discussion with Bo Johansson
Attend and observe Stockholm Cathedral Choir conducted by Gustaf Sjorkvist
29-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal of Stockholm Musikgymnasium Chamber Choir
Travel to Uppsala
Attend and observe rehearsal of Orphei Dranger Male Choir conducted by Robert Sund
Travel to Stockholm
30-05-01
Attend and observe rehearsal of Adolf Fredrik's Girls Choir conducted by Bo Johansson
Attend diploma concert of Kungliga Musikhogskolan conducted by Christopher Holgersson
Choirs: Norstrands Kammakor, Riddarholmens Kammakor, Kungliga Musikhogskolan Kammakor and Vokalensemble, Mikaeli Chamber Choir.
31-05-01
Repertoire research at Gerhman's Music Publishing House
Attend rehearsal of Sjorkvist Chamber Choir
1-06-01
Research repertoire at Gerhman's Music Publishing House
5-06-01
Travel to Arlanda Airport
Travel to Uppsala
Attend concert of Orphei Dranger conducted by Robert Sund
Travel to Arlanda
6-6-01
Travel Stockholm to London
Travel London to New York, USA
7-06-01
Attend and observe open rehearsal of The New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Masur
Meeting with Michael Nielson re Educational Programs of the NY Philharmonic
Backstage tour of Metropolitan Opera

9-06-01
Attend and observe closed rehearsal of New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Masur

10-06-01
Travel to Hartford, Connecticut

11-06-01 to 17-06-01
Visit former Masters conducting lecturer Professor Ed Bolkovac at Hartford University

18-06-01
Travel to New York
Travel to Vancouver, Canada
Attend and observe rehearsal of Elektra Women's Choir conducted by Morna Edmundson
Discussion with Morna

20-06-01
Repertoire research at Elektra Women's Choir Music Library

21-06-01
Attend and observe final rehearsal and recording of Coastal Sounds Youth Chamber Choir conducted by Morna Edmundson

23-05-01
Travel to Salt Spring Island with Chor Leoni Men's Choir conducted by Dianne Loomer
Attend rehearsal and concert of Chor Leoni Men's Choir

24-05-01
Attend concert Chor Leoni Men's Choir conducted by Diane Loomer
Travel to Vancouver

25-06-01
Travel to San Francisco, California, USA
Travel to Palo Alto
Attend and observe rehearsal of Peninsula Women's Chorus conducted by Dr Patty Hennings

26-06-01
Meeting with Conductor Dr Patty Hennings
Repertoire research
Project discussions
Attend and observe recording session of Peninsula Women's Chorus conducted by Dr Patty Hennings

27-06-01
Repertoire Research at Foothills College where the Music Library of the Peninsula Women's Chorus is stored.
Repertoire discussion with librarian Anne Anderson
Meeting with Board of Directors of the Peninsula Women's Chorus
Presentation of Australian Choral Music Lecture for the Peninsula Women's Chorus

28-06-01 to 2-07-01
Travel to San Francisco
Free time

3-07-01
Travel to Vancouver

4-7-01
Meeting with Jon Washburn of Vancouver Chamber Choir
Canadian repertoire research at Northwestern Musical Services

5-7-01
Repertoire research at Elektra Women's Choir Music Library

7-7-01
Repertoire research at Northwestern Musical Services

9-7-01
Attend and observe final rehearsal before AmericaFest of Elektra Women's Choir conducted by Morna Edmundson and Diane Loomer

10-7-01
Travel to Seattle
Register for AmericaFest International Women's Singing Festival
SEE ATTACHED FOR FULL DETAILS OF FESTIVAL ITINERARY JULY 10TH TO JULY 14TH

15-7-01 to 17-7-01
Travel Seattle to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to Auckland, Auckland to Brisbane

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND LEARNINGS

My Churchill Fellowship program was, in many ways, quite a complex program in its planning and perhaps rather ambitious in seeking to gather as much information and musical experience as possible. The topic of choral methodology alone represents a wide-ranging area of study that encompasses aspects of group/solo vocal pedagogy (and in particular the “changing voice” years for both girls and boys), rehearsal management strategies, psychology, conducting gestures, knowledge of repertoire and musical style, and performance aesthetics. With respect to the administrative aspect of my project description, I aimed to visit and meet with choral administrators or conductors to discuss various issues of financial support for basic operating costs, repertoire selection, purchasing and commissioning of choral music, innovative choral projects, recording ventures and touring opportunities and funding. As an aside to my project, I was also very interested in other choirs’ experiences with respect to the problem of encouraging the participation of boys in choirs.

The opportunity to visit other countries and cultures, to liaise with conductors and to observe their work at rehearsals provided me with a wealth of knowledge and first hand experience. It would be an impossible task to outline all the benefits of such a study program in a report of this nature, but I have endeavoured to present the most pertinent and relevant issues in terms of my experiences as they relate to choral music in Australia.

In my work as a choral director/conductor and a founding director of several choral activities, I found that there was a need to gather further knowledge from internationally recognised choral organisations whose musical success, as a result of innovative programming and attention to pedagogical issues, identified them as leaders in the choral field.

1. Cultural identity through choral music repertoire.

Many of the choirs I visited (*Cantamus, NYCGB, Tapiola Choir, Finnish Radio Choir, Adolph Fredrik’s Girls Choir, Swedish Radio Choir, Elektra and Peninsula Women’s Chorus*) developed their international reputation through the promotion of their own national music, newly composed/commissioned choral works and the ability to present interesting programs. During my time overseas, it became very apparent to me that there was much to be gained from promoting one’s own national identity, firstly in terms of developing personal self-esteem and a national pride; secondly in terms of promoting our own country’s music, literature and history. Choral music is a medium through which both performers and audiences can gain a deeper appreciation of Australian culture and it thus serves as a vehicle to convey a sense of national pride.

In Australia, we have been very fortunate to be able to rest on the international laurels of a handful of youth choirs such as *Australian Voices* and *Gondwana Voices*, who have done an excellent job as ambassadors for our country, promoting new Australian choral music on the international choral scene. However, there is a real need within the Australian choral community to encourage ALL Australian choral conductors and their choirs to present Australian music in their concert programs. Whilst 20th century Australian music composition went through a highly experimental period which was not welcomed by most audience ears, there is still exists a wealth of accessible music which remains relatively untapped by choirs in Australia.

Australia is in a unique multi-cultural position and it is this cultural diversity that influences our own composers to write in a unique way. This is one reason why Australian choral music creates a stirring interest overseas. I had the pleasure of giving two lectures on Australian

choral music in Finland and the USA. At both these sessions I was surprised to receive such a positive response to the music I presented – something I fear we, as Australians, take very much for granted. There is a need for us to cease our parochial existence and to be more motivated and aggressive in promoting our music both at home and abroad.

2. Cultural exchange and performance opportunities

Internationally, a very active choral scene exists in both Europe and America. Choirs on these continents have exposure to performance opportunities and experience through choral festivals, eisteddfods, and competitions both nationally and internationally. Part of the reason for being able to attend choral festivals on a regular basis lies in the smaller travelling distances between countries and subsequent lower touring costs.

The *National Youth Choir of Great Britain* makes a regular world tour every two years. The *Tapiola Choir* takes two or three overseas tours a year (all expenses paid) and other choirs receive sponsorship through a number of foundations, trusts and government grants. Take, for example, *Cantamus* where individual members do not pay more than £150 per tour with the balance subsidised by sponsorship.

Australia is isolated geographically in terms of distance from the cultural centres of Europe and America. Our choral music tradition is inextricably linked with European culture – the countries of our heritage and the roots of Western music, including the harmonies of rock/pop music culture. Our Asian neighbours have no choral music tradition or culture. This is an important reason for Australia to actively pursue cultural exchange through choral performance and the promotion of Australian choral music firstly in Europe and America and secondly in Asia.

While there is a significant level of professional and amateur exchange available through a wide variety of sporting avenues in Australia, it is the fundamental nature of our cultural heritage that prompts me to state that there is an urgent need for financial support for exchanges in youth choral music and choral festival opportunities for choirs of all types.

I believe that many benefits can be gained from overseas travel. It fosters a deeper appreciation of the cultures of other countries and enables the individual to become aware of those aspects of life that we have been blessed with in our own “lucky country”. This personal education and knowledge can easily be learned through the cross-cultural experiences provided through choral music. Many youth choirs focus on performing music of other cultures in its original language. Choristers can sing in a foreign language without necessarily having to understand every single word. It is the marriage of text and music, a type of musical picture, which gives the performer an insight into the world of the composer, their character and nationality, ably assisted by a literal translation of the text. In a reciprocal way, cultural exchanges also ensue that our own culture is exported simultaneously. Cultural exchanges are an enriching form of education for conductors and choristers, which cannot truly be experienced in any other form.

3. Vocal pedagogy - Technique, tone and language, gesture, warm-ups

As a voice teacher, I have always worked on the principle of engaging the whole person (holistic approach) to achieve a healthy pedagogical approach. During my time overseas, it was very reassuring to hear my basic principles of teaching being reiterated by conductors and voice teachers. Conductors often work with choristers who have little or no formal voice training, therefore it is very important to have the necessary skills to teach a vocal technique that is successful in an “en masse” situation.

I was fortunate to have a session with **Pamela Cook** of *Cantamus*. She shared a few of her techniques for vocal support mechanisms and developing tone. I was very impressed with the vocal tone of her choir and it was evident at rehearsals that Pamela considers this aspect to be of primary importance in developing and maintaining the integrity of choral music performance. Pamela tends to concentrate on producing a “rich, fruity vocal tone” which is quite evident in the alto section of the choir. But it is the variety of tone that the choir can produce that was quite fascinating. *Cantamus* perform with a vocal colour and a tone that belies the age of the choristers, who are all in their teens.

Cantamus also runs a vocal training program that acts as a feeder for the main choir of older girls. I observed rehearsals and group training methods with **Joy MacNicol**. The relationship of gesture, descriptive images and vocal tone are all inherently interwoven into vocal training methods and it is always interesting to note the everyday images used by other teachers in the training of young voices. Healthy vocal principles are very important in tone production, especially for young, developing and changing voices. The choir training program can be summed up in one word “Belief” – believe that you can sing it and you can.

As a choral director, one also realises that gesture plays an important role in performance. The choir ultimately responds to the conductor through visual cues – i.e. gesture, body language and facial expressiveness. During a week long camp with the *National Choir of Great Britain* at Windermere in the Lake District of England, I was able to observe the work of **Mike Brewer**. The choir of 90 members rehearsed each day from 8:45am until 9:00 pm and surprisingly ended the day and the camp with voices still intact. The integration of vocal technique and gesture practiced in this situation was one of most rewarding aspects of my program. Mike Brewer will be releasing a publication outlining his techniques in June 2002.

The *National Youth Choir of Great Britain* has a unique support structure of singing teachers who also attend the camps, which are held twice a year for intensive training. An individual record of vocal development is kept for each chorister and each chorister has several lessons at each camp. **Gesture** plays an important role in the development and freeing up of the vocal mechanisms. The four voice teachers work in close contact with each other and the choral conductor to provide choristers with the ultimate in choral/vocal experience. Anecdotal notes are maintained on each chorister as an aid to evaluating vocal development. A “breathy vocal tone” is not acceptable.

When speaking of gesture and its relationship to singing technique, it is difficult to explain adequately all the non-verbal cues in a written form. This aspect of choral pedagogy relies heavily on the ability to experience workshop sessions in action. This was one of the primary reasons for applying for a Churchill Fellowship to observe this work in practice.

Another aspect of pedagogy that is worthy of mention is the variety of **choral tone** I observed in several countries, especially Finland and Sweden. Singers are constantly aware of the timbre of their voice and how this timbre (tone colour) changes as a consequence of emotional factors, diction/language and pronunciation/articulation. In my travels, I found that there was quite a distinct relationship between the inherent characteristics of the spoken language and choral vocal tone.

I was fascinated by the range of back, forward and diphthong vowels of the Finnish language and this was a catalyst for starting Finnish lessons on my return to Australia, apart from the fact that I had researched and discovered a vast amount of modern repertoire available for choirs. The tonal shades of the Finnish language translate easily to the choral tone, and because the language has a universal pronunciation i.e. all letters are sounded and pronounced the same whenever they appear, a choral conductor’s job is made that much easier. It was also interesting to note that all R’s are rolled and the rolled R technique is a feature of **warm-up vocal techniques** in both Finland and Sweden. I have frequently used

this technique at choral rehearsals and hearing rolled R's incorporated in the language reinforced the notion that vocal tone is enhanced by this ability to relax the tongue, open the throat and keep the breath connected to the voiced consonants.

I also came to the realisation that Australian choirs were easily recognised by virtue of their bright vocal tone, as a result of our spoken twang (which is halfway between American and English) and that it is imperative that we should continue to develop our own unique vocal tone and not mimic the tone of the English cathedral choirs! I had a singing lesson from **Margaret Field**, an Australian soprano who has now lived in London for 30 years. She was quite enthusiastic to hear my singing voice, and had great pleasure in telling me that Australian voices were very distinctive in resonance and timbre.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to visit so many choirs in my time overseas because these rehearsals provided me with an in-depth knowledge of **warm-up exercises**. It was interesting to note that whilst conductors all over the world seem to encourage the same basic vocal principles, it is the creativity that they bring to this essential part of the rehearsal strategy that sets each of them apart. When conducting a group of non-professional singers, the responsibility for vocal technique lies in the hands of the conductor. Through sensible rehearsal techniques and a healthy approach to vocal technique, a choir can be guided to a higher level of expertise in performance.

4. Conducting experience

I had several conducting opportunities, as well as conducting workshops and lessons to attend while overseas. In England, I was fortunate to conduct the *Nottingham Youth Chamber Choir* and the *East of England Singers* and used these rehearsals to present Australian repertoire. I was also chosen, after having conducting lessons with **Jesper Grove-Jørgenson** (Denmark), to conduct the Chamber Choir of the 4th International Easter Workshop for the final concert, in Brighton, England. I also conducted warm-ups for several choirs including *Cantamus* (England), *East of England Singers* (England) and *Philomela* (Finland).

In both Finland and Sweden, I observed conducting techniques that were “close to the heart” – technique and gesture that had a strong personal connection with the music. I attended the conducting classes of **Matti Hyokki** (conducting performance strand), **Timo Nuoranne** (Church Music strand) and **Timo Lehtovaara** (Education strand) at the *Sibelius Academy* and also observed their conducting/rehearsal techniques at choir rehearsals. It was unfortunate that my time in Finland coincided with auditions for the next year's intake and a flurry of end of semester concert activity plus exams, which made it difficult to schedule a private conducting lesson with my chosen conductors. However, I was seconded to an examination jury for choral conducting at the *Sibelius Academy* – a different kind of experience.

In Sweden, I was very fortunate to have lessons with **Stephan Parkman**, who gave me practical advice on some of the finer points of conducting technique, and to meet with and observe rehearsals with **Eric Ericsson**, **Tonú Kaljuste**, **Professor Anders Ebý** and **Gustaf Sjökvist**. What impressed me most about these world-class conductors was their professional and personal integrity. Not only were they talented musicians/conductors but also humble people, very willing to share their expertise and knowledge with colleagues.

5. Choral Strategies for better team players

The *Tapiola Choir* is an internationally renowned children's choir, founded in 1963 by **Erkki Pohjola**. Its current conductor, **Kari Ala-Polanen** has brought a wealth of educational

experience and a number of innovative strategies to this special choir. His philosophy for creating and developing a sense of team spirit and cooperation within the choir is also highly sought after by commercial companies.

The *Tapiola Choir's* main objectives are to provide an environment that nurtures the personal and spiritual growth of its members, thus giving the children opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills on many performance levels. The choir seeks to perform repertoire that will be educationally challenging, always performing in original languages and tackling new music, commissioned works and enjoying the opportunity to form a working relationship with modern composers.

Their conductor seeks to incorporate a high level of ownership and responsibility within this children's choir by encouraging a godfather/godmother role between the "older" more experienced members and the new members. This idea is used in both musical and social contexts and furthermore enables choristers to form a strong sense of group cohesiveness, goal focus and vision. It was a rewarding experience to be able to observe rehearsals and to hear the "Tapiola Sound" (a term coined by overseas critics), their traditional Finnish repertoire, new repertoire that has made them famous world-wide and also "Imberombera", a piece by an Australian composer, Michael Atherton.

In recent years, there has been a short cultural exchange program between the *Tapiola Choir* and the *Sydney Children's Choir* (conducted by Lyn Williams). This program has enabled the conductors to work with each other's choirs, exchange repertoire, and similarly, for a small number of choristers, the opportunity to visit the reciprocal country and attend choir rehearsals. It would certainly be a valuable educational, cultural and social experience to see more programs of this nature in our Australian arts grants lists.

This Tapiola team spirit is also evident in the work of **Bo Johansson's** choir *The Adolf Fredrik's Girls Choir*. Bo incorporates a similar work ethic for his choristers, who are aged between 11 and 16 years. Rehearsals are twice a week and the choristers are expected to learn their pieces for homework.

Another exponent of successful team playing was **Dr Patricia Hennings** of *The Peninsula Women's Chorus*. I was extremely fortunate to meet this wonderful conductor (who has since sadly passed away due to breast cancer). Her enthusiasm and dynamic presence was the guiding spirit of her choir and for others who met her. Patty encouraged her choristers to be a part of the whole choral process and her motto, "Music is community, community of heart and soul and voice!" had much to do with transitioning the members of *PWC* from a group of local community singers to a nationally recognised choir.

Each choir member completes a questionnaire asking them to identify the skills they could bring to the choir. Members are then given a "job opportunity" which would assist the functioning of the choir in specific areas. In this way, each member becomes an integral part of the group and therefore feels responsible for its successes. The choir demonstrated a remarkable community focus and used the "so-called" feminine qualities of caring, nurturing and accepting responsibility to great advantage. Creating individual responsibility within the choir drew with it the expectation that the individual would be musically responsible. Choristers were always expected to learn music from memory and they developed learning methods to do this. Patty says that "the memorization of music allows focus on music and internalisation, takes us out of our books and into life". She revelled in taking risks, creating new opportunities, new experiences and asked her choristers to learn, learn, learn. Patty Hennings was a true inspiration. My first choral piece "A Fanfare of Praise" is dedicated to her and the Peninsula Women's Choir.

The *National Youth Choir of Great Britain* also operates on an extremely high level of expectation. By observing rehearsals, I learnt that as a conductor, one's expectations can never be too high. There is always something more to achieve and to strive for. This is why motivational techniques are so important in choral rehearsals and performance, to develop personal esteem, and to provide members with the foundations for being able to achieve goals. Generally we tend to be a little "laid-back" in Australia, probably a result of the warm weather and our outdoor culture. So after visiting this choir, I vowed that I would always expect more from my choirs in the most positive way!

6. Sponsorship and Grants

As the founding director of *Chanterelle* women's choir (and struggling to financially support the choir with my own personal financial resources), I was very interested in the level of sponsorship that overseas choirs receive from government bodies, corporations and the community. It is a constant struggle for Australian choirs endeavouring to obtain any financial assistance – mainly because choirs are considered to be an amateur form of music making. Choirs do not generally fall within the criteria guidelines for grants applications. Many are amateur groups without being an incorporated body – a status that presents significant problems for their eligibility in applying for grants.

I found that some choirs enjoyed the support of one or more of the following groups: local councils, county councils, government bodies and corporate bodies. The English choir *Cantamus* receives generous funding from the local Mansfield Council for its operational costs and has recently come into the spotlight with a £250,000 sponsorship and recording – "Aurora" – courtesy of Warner Brothers.

The *Nottingham Youth Chamber Choir* is supported by the Nottingham Choral Trust, which is administered by the Nottingham County Council, and provides rehearsal space and operating funds for administration, musical directors and accompanists. The trust also provides funding for instrumental and choral weekend workshops with innovative titles such as "Vocal Software" and "String-wise".

The *Tapiola Choir* receives funding from the Tapiola Council, which enables them to employ and pay the wages of a full-time administrator and a full-time musical director as well as an office space. In Australia, there are no grants available on an annual basis to support the costs of general administration and to employ directors.

The *Tapiola Choir* receives major sponsorship from the grocery chain, Tesco (currently a three-year contract) and from Nokia. When the choir tours, it travels with all expenses paid – one of the perks of being an internationally renowned choir.

This information only served to heighten the existing lack of corporate sponsorship for amateur arts groups in Australia and specifically, choirs. Being an Australian sporting body makes a significant difference in the sponsorship stakes. Arts education could significantly increase its service delivery meeting the needs of the community if business and the public at large had a better appreciation of arts-based activities.

7. Encouraging people to sing

Meeting key people in the choral world who shared my belief in the principle that singing is a great and healthy way to make the arts accessible to everyone, was one of the highlights of the Churchill program. The voice is an inexpensive instrument, which has the capacity for personal expression and provides the means to achieve a rewarding personal experience as a whole. This "belief" principle is proudly shared by the *Cantamus* training program and by

many of the world's choral conductors. The "You can do it" approach has positive benefits for the physical, mental and spiritual (not necessarily in the religious sense) side of the persona and crosses all age barriers.

While children's choirs continue to flourish and enjoy a high profile, something mysterious appears to happen in the secondary schooling years, when boy's voices mature and when teenage girls also deal with the developmental "breathy vocal tone". It is not acceptably "cool" to be in a choir, especially for boys. I spoke with several directors on this issue and there appears to be no "cut and dried" success program. The types of programs used include: establishing a boy's choir so that it provides a supportive environment (free from embarrassment) for the vocal maturation period and bribery with pizza/sports workshops. Even the cathedral choir programs in England are undergoing a radical change in thought as it becomes more difficult to attract boys to singing in a "lace collar" tradition. Girls are now being accepted into English cathedral choir programs. This trend is tending to cause a few problems, especially with regard to maintaining the traditional pure vocal tonal requirements, as their (girl's) voices mature at an earlier age than those of their male counterparts.

8. Repertoire

As a choral conductor, I have certainly felt the isolation of living in Australia in terms of the accessibility to choral music through the local music retail industry. Apart from the fact that searching for choir repertoire is very time-consuming, it is also quite a frustrating task trying to choose appropriate music when there are very few adequate businesses in Australia where one can go and view scores before purchasing. Often purchases must be made simply on the basis of a suggestive title and then the obligatory business practice of ordering in multiple copies makes the situation even more difficult, risky and potentially expensive. There is a strong need for an Australian choral specialist business to supply international music publications / choral music at reasonable prices.

The Churchill Fellowship allowed me the time and opportunity to search for repertoire at the following places:

Boosey and Hawkes	London, England
SULASOL	Helsinki, Finland
Gehrmans	Stockholm, Sweden
Byron Hoyt	San Francisco, CA, USA
Northwest Music Services	Vancouver, BC, Canada
Cypress Press Publishing	Vancouver, BC, Canada
Treble Clef Press	AmericaFest – International Women's Singing Festival, Seattle, USA.

I was also able to meet or liase with, the following composers/arrangers:

Michael Neaum	Mansfield, England
Mike Brewer	Birmingham, England
Oscar Escalada	4 th International Easter Chamber Choir, England
Kari Ala-Pölänen	Espoo, Finland
Matti Hyökki	Helsinki, Finland
Reijo Kekkonen	Helsinki, Finland
Jyrki Linjama	Helsinki, Finland
Timo Lehtovaara	Helsinki, Finland
Jani Sivén	Helsinki, Finland
Arvo Pärt	Stockholm, Sweden
Robert Sund	Uppsala, Sweden
Jackson Berkey	AmericaFest – International Women's Singing Festival
Ron Jeffers	California, USA

The opportunity to significantly enhance my knowledge of repertoire was a very valuable and rewarding experience. Apart from visiting retail choral music specialists, I was able to speak to conductors about current and past concert repertoire, browse through the choral libraries of *Cantamus*, *Elektra* and *The Peninsula Women's Chorus*, as well as read scores at choir rehearsals. Some choirs have librarians, in which case I often received a guided tour plus information on the choir's favourite performance pieces. I also had the privilege of listening to a number of choral recordings, which yielded further choral repertoire.

9. AmericaFest

This Festival was the culmination of my choral journey and featured 13 women's choirs from around the world including: *Cantoria Alberto Grau* (Venezuela), *Kanta Cantemus Koroa* (Spain), *Serena* (Finland), *Elektra Women's Choir* (Canada), *Peninsula Women's Chorus* (Palo Alto, CA), *Seattle Girls' Choir "Prime Voci"*, *She* (NY) and *Viva Voce* (Utah). The festival's main aims of choral excellence and ideas that matter, brought together a wealth of world-wide talents and experience, to perform choral music that expressed universal themes that connect women.

The program included sessions on new music from around the world, massed choral rehearsals with internationally renowned conductors, a specially commissioned work for the festival and a series of concerts; given by each individual choir as well as the massed choir in splendid performance venues.

This was purported to be the first women's festival of its kind in the world and the 500 delegates would agree that it was a tremendous experience for like-minded women. The love of choral singing reaches across artistic boundaries and connects people in community spirit. I made many new friends and was pleasantly surprised in the interest that was generated by being the only Australian representative at the festival. I made a rash promise to bring my women's choir for the second festival in 2003, depending on tour funding!

After this final experience, which topped off a most amazing choral journey, it was very difficult to come down to earth again. The final flights home on Alaskan Airlines and Qantas, were the catalyst for the writing of my first choral composition "A Fanfare of Praise". After experiencing such a wealth of choral music in the preceding four months, it was a natural course to move into the art composing.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Australia IS a lucky country. We have much to offer the world in terms of our musical talent – conductors, composers and performers.
2. The promotion of our own Australian choral music is essential to and symbiotic of, the existence of our inherent eclectic, multicultural social structure.
3. Australian music IS marketable and Australian musicians, conductors and publishers need to be educated and motivated to actively promote our products both nationally and internationally.
4. Concert repertoire is an excellent vehicle by which to develop and promote an appreciation of Australian and other cultures.
5. Choirs are, more often than not, ambassadors for their national identity.
6. Australia does have “home-grown” choirs of a very high standard, but they do not have the means to become internationally “known” because of geographical isolation, the high costs of travel and the difficulty of obtaining touring funds.
7. It is a known fact that the majority of community choirs in Australia tend to have predominantly mature age members, so it is critically important that today’s youth are encouraged to sing as a personal expression of communication. The choirs of the future rely on today’s successful foundations.
8. There is a need to provide for long-term financial assistance, particularly operational expenses, so that that youth choral music organisations can provide the foundational basis for the further development of the Australian choral scene.
9. It is imperative that the profile of choral music in Australia be appropriately publicised as a valuable experience in personal development.
10. There is a need to be more aggressive in providing international programs of a cross-cultural nature, particularly as the demand for growing global awareness increases through telecommunications (media and internet).
11. National ventures such as those observed at The National Youth Choir of Great Britain are not feasible here in Australia because of the sheer size of our country. The idea could however, be successfully applied on a smaller scale.
12. There are many overseas choirs that have indicated an interest in touring to Australia but all ask about the possibilities of performing at a choral festival. There are few of these in Australia.
13. Vocal pedagogy develops out of the inherent characteristics of the language.
14. Gesture and body language are an integral part of conducting and healthy vocal technique.
15. My beliefs with respect to knowledge and learning have yet again been reinforced – one can never know enough. Each day provides a new learning experience in some small way.
16. I believe that the whole world should sing given the benefits singing could provide!
17. My personal skills and experience are of value in the promotion of community choirs and choral music/repertoire, both nationally and internationally, by whatever small means I can provide.
18. Patty Hennings advice for conductors was “Your ‘best’ choir is the one you happen to be standing in front of at that moment”.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

My involvement in the dissemination of information within Australia is illustrated by my recent activities since returning from the Churchill Fellowship, which ended in July 2001.

1. 4MBS Classic Radio July 21st – Program discussion/interview on Churchill Fellowship plus my choice of music from overseas choirs.
2. ANCA (Australian National Choral Association) Qld Notes – short article on Finnish repertoire for treble and mixed voices.
3. Further research in Sydney (September) at the Australian Music Centre to update knowledge of new Australian choral music.
4. Chanterelle women's choir concert "A Choral Journey" November 4th 2001 featuring repertoire from the five countries include in Churchill program, performed in original languages.
5. Vocal workshop with Clayfield College Combined Choirs Junior and Senior School.
6. Vocal workshop with Canberra Choral Society – involving new vocal techniques.
7. Conductor of the Asia Pacific Activities Conference Choral Festival in Shanghai November 17th 2001 – secondary school massed choir – auditioned from China, Korea, Japan and The Philippines. Set repertoire included Australian and Finnish repertoire.
8. Lecture Evening "Choral/Vocal Technique" – Shanghai, China for Asia Pacific Choral Conductors
9. The Queensland Youth Choir Inc Gala Concert – combined choirs performance of Finnish composer Jukka Kankainen's "Alleluia"
10. Workshop with Clayfield College Premier Choir, Canzona, on Finnish repertoire and correct pronunciation.
11. Return visit to Finland in January 2002 to further my research in Finnish choral repertoire, to interview Finnish choral composers, to attend a short University course in Finnish, and to lecture on Australian Choral Music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and Jyväskylä Conservatorium in Central Finland. I also gave several choral workshops with children's choirs, community choirs and the Sibelius High School Choir, presenting Australian choral repertoire.
12. Composition. As a result of my Churchill Fellowship experiences, I was inspired to pursue the composition of choral music more seriously. At this stage, I have three works for women's choir being published by SULASOL (Suomen Laulajain ja Soittajain Liitto ry) a Finnish music publishing company, due date March 31st 2002. Several further projects are in progress, and I am also collaborating with new Australian poets.

As a conductor, adjudicator, workshop clinician, writer, and now a composer, the means for disseminating the knowledge gained from my Churchill Fellowship is significant, especially given my expanded national and international connections. As a direct result of the Churchill Program, I have had the opportunity to establish a professional network with overseas choirs and conductors in England, Finland, Sweden, the United States of America and Canada, which has proved to be an invaluable means by which to promote Australian choral music and the Australian Music Centre at an international level. This also provides me with a foundation network to set up future cross-cultural choral educational programs and will thus allow me to share my newly acquired knowledge and experience with choirs, conductors, administrators and vocalists.

As a member of a number of music committees in Australia, my expertise will also be available for the benefit of the community on a state and national basis. I will endeavour to remain active in the way that I currently operate: through private teaching studios, conducting school and community choirs, presenting radio programs, interviews, and writing journal articles on relevant topics.

As a conductor, my work educating choristers and audiences alike through concert and program repertoire will continue. In the future, I intend to seriously pursue composing new choral works for children, youth and women's choirs with particular attention to works that are pedagogically appropriate for these groups.

Other future projects will include a series of written articles on repertoire for youth choirs and women's choirs, which will allow me to share the fruits of my overseas repertoire research with a wider audience. Repertoire research is a time-consuming process and an area where choral conductors experience difficulties because of the lack of information, particularly on the availability of new works and where to get them. The opportunity to pursue repertoire research overseas is a dream for many conductors and I feel quite strongly about disseminating this information through the appropriate musical journal channels for all to benefit.

The Churchill Fellowship has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and the impetus to make significant contributions to Australian choral music in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the personal level

1. Education through concerts and choral workshops – music performance and vocal pedagogy workshops with individual choirs
2. Education through professional development presentation to teachers/conductors through education boards and Australian National Choral Association (ANCA) – practical workshops and written journal articles.
3. Cross-cultural exchange internationally through my personal work as conductor, clinician and lecturer – a two-way interchange to promote Australian music and promote the music of other countries within Australia.
4. Cross-cultural exchange through the organisation of choir tours.
5. Liaison with other cultural organisations to plan special choral events.
6. New choral projects that would promote the:
 - a. benefits of choral music; and
 - b. the music of young choral composers and writers, working through appropriate organising bodies eg. ANCA and writers associations.
7. Maintaining the profile of Australian choral music and choral music in general through the media, and networking with appropriate individuals – radio interviews, newspaper/journal articles and reports.
8. Applying to take a more active role in the promotion of Australian music through the Australian Music Centre (Sydney) in order to reach a wider audience.
9. Lobby the appropriate authorities with respect to providing financial or other support for the arts – local and state government.
10. On a national/international level, there is a need for Australia to offer a choral festival or competition that would attract visiting international choirs. This would not only provide a forum for workshops by international exponents of choral music but would also allow Australians to present their own music for the world.

At the broader level

Other improvements that **should** be made in Australia:

11. Grants for operational costs need to be made available for organisations that provide the community with strong arts/cultural foundations for the youth and women. This will enable groups to function successfully, to attract a wider membership, to sustain growth and to continue to develop skills on a long-term basis within the community for the betterment of future generations. Too often, grants and public monies are awarded to fringe arts group projects that results in a once-only performance which does not provide any ongoing training or long-term benefits for the community apart from being a “one-hit wonder” or interest factor which unites cultural entities for a short period.
12. More adequate financial support for organizations/institutions that (solely) promote Australian publishing of music and literature. There is a further need to encourage businesses to publish Australian music and for the government to provide financial assistance where required. Recently we have seen the demise of one of Australia’s leading choral music retail specialists and their music publishing company, which had forged strong musical links worldwide through their promotion of Australian Music and

forward thinking. Their demise leaves a hole in the retail and publishing choral music industry in Australia.

13. Financial support for presenters of programs that aim to promote Australian choral music overseas on behalf of individuals and/or companies.
14. Provision of scholarships/financial support for arts programs that promote young Australian musicians, choral composers and choral conductors.
15. Reward incentive scheme for businesses/corporations who provide sponsorship and support for choral music and the arts.
16. School education programs should also aim, through programs of history and culture, to instil and develop a sense of national pride in our population – a pride, which will flow through to enhance the growth of a national identity through the arts. A national identity cannot be wholly based on our sporting prowess - our arts identity represents the creative culmination of knowledge and an eclectic cultural influence. It enriches our lives in many ways and its benefits are felt by the widest cross-section of the Australian community.

Music is the food of the soul and a medium by which cultural experience is conveyed. Choral music will provide future generations with a living, communicable historical and artistic heritage. It is therefore of primary importance that we as a nation continue to develop and nurture arts programs with strong educational values and innovative directions, to support music making at all levels in the community which will inevitably foster national pride.