

THE WINSTON CHURCILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Heather Barman

2005 Churchill Fellow

THE DAME ROMA MITCHELL FELLOWSHIP FOR THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS.

The Dame Roma Mitchell Fellowship to investigate Choral Programmes and traditions established in prominent Cathedral Schools and Colleges in the United Kingdom. To use and manipulate this information into an Australian context, suitable for supporting a music education program within a school and for the pursuit of excellence in musicianship through an integrated and developmental choral programme.

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INTRODUCTION

The Choir School's Association in the United Kingdom comprises forty-four schools which are attached to cathedrals, churches or college chapels. Each school is unique and there is a mix of co-educational and single sex schools. Of the forty-four Choirs Schools, three are state schools, the remainder being independent. It is no surprise therefore that English cathedral schools have been responsible for preserving the lion's share of the English choral traditions evident today.

The Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship enabled me to travel to the United Kingdom to study a variety of the choral programmes. I visited ten schools, each with a slightly different approach chorally but with many similarities. The classroom music programmes also differed, but again many similarities were observed in the teaching styles.

This report provides information on the chorister programmes that I observed and also highlights the many positive musical outcomes that emanate from this intensive singing based programme.

I would like to thank the Churchill Trust and especially the Dame Roma Mitchell Foundation who sponsored this Fellowship. They have allowed me to study an area of music about which I am passionate and this has extended not only my understanding of choral development but confirmed in my mind the potential that sound choral practice has on musical development.

I also wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement that I have received from the Headmaster, Mr Simon Murray, the Head of the Primary School, Mr Jeff Symms and the executive and academic staff at Canberra Grammar School. They have been generous in allowing me the time to undertake this study and their support throughout the process was and is greatly appreciated. The following people have been tireless in their encouragement of me throughout my time at Canberra Grammar School and I owe much to them for their support: Mr Craig Woodland, Mr Adrian Keenan, Mrs Jeannine Keenan, Mrs Virginia Torrens and Ms Harriet Torrens.

I would particularly like to thank Mr Richard Gill OAM Hon Doc Mus (ECU) whose influence as a music educator and choral director when I was a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music instilled a life long passion for the promotion of excellence in music education and musical performance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The fellowship was undertaken between January 9th and February 24th 2006. My aims were to investigate the English Choral tradition in Choir Schools and to establish how the choristers achieve musical excellence; the impact this intensive choral education has on the development of musical skills; how to manage the change in the male voice and maintain choral interest in ex-choristers; the role of singing in the general classroom programme and the relationship, if any, between the classroom music programme and the chorister programme.

Highlights:

- Visiting St John's College Cambridge and meeting Dr David Hill and his associates.
- Attending Choral Evensong nearly most days and hearing choirs of exceptional standard
- Meeting counter-tenor Nigel Perrin (ex-King's Singer fame) and David Lowe (Professional singer and Academic at the Royal College of Music)
- Immersing myself in the great works of the choral tradition, from Palestrina to Holst, Byrd to Bingham.
- Walking through Chapels and Cathedrals such as St Paul's London and experiencing the history, traditions and atmosphere of these amazing buildings.
- Mr Stephen Threlfall and the staff of Chetham's School of Music where an amazing musical standard exists and the importance the school places on singing in the musical development of their students.
- Meeting Dr Brian Rees, Headmaster of Pilgrims' School, Winchester and chairman of the Choir Schools Association and the staff at Pilgrim's who were very welcoming.

Conclusions:

Choir schools provide an extraordinary musical education to their young choristers. This education produces 'professional young musicians', develops excellence in the areas of sight singing, aural skills and their understanding of notation, theory and harmony is beyond that of most children of their age. To support musical development in children it is vital that children commence singing at an early age and form the foundations for skilled-based learning as well as for the development of musical expression and musical excellence in performance.

Implementation and Dissemination

- The principles learnt will be implemented within the class music and choral programmes I offer at Canberra Grammar School.
- The findings to be published in articles for Music Education Organisations. Eg. Western Australian Orff Association Bulletin.
- Circulation of my findings to prominent members of the Music Education fraternity.
- Sharing my findings with colleagues in the region.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

January 8th to January 11th, Salisbury, Wiltshire

- Salisbury Cathedral School, (Pre-prep to Year 8 co-educational, male and female choristers) Headmaster Mr Robert Thackray, Director of Music, Mr Ian Wicks
- Salisbury Cathedral, Director of Music Mr David Halls

January 12th to January 16th, Wells, Somerset

- Wells Cathedral School (Pre-prep through Secondary co-educational, male and female choristers) Headmistress Mrs Elizabeth Cairncross, Director of Music, Ms Dorothy Nancekievill, Junior School Director of Music Ms Jill Edmonds. *Wells Cathedral School is one of four Music Specialist Schools in the UK*
- Wells Cathedral, Director of Music, Mr Matthew Owens

January 18th to January 23rd, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

- St John's College School, (Pre-prep to Year 8, co-educational, male only choristers) Headmaster Mr Kevin Jones, Pre-prep Director of Music Ms Kathryn Gibbs
- St John's College, Director of Music, Dr David Hill

January 24th to January 26th, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

- King's College School, (Pre-prep to Year 8 co-educational, male only choristers) Headmaster Mr Nicholas Robinson
- King's College, Director of Music, Mr Stephen Cleobury

January 27th to January 31st, London

- St Paul's Cathedral School, (Pre-prep to Year 8, co-educational, male only choristers) Headmaster Mr Andrew Dobbin, Director of Music, Mr Mark Williams
- St Paul's Cathedral, Director of Music, Mr Malcolm Archer

February 1st to February 3rd, Tring, Hertfordshire

- The Arts Education School, (Year 5 through Secondary co-educational) Headmaster Mr Stephan Anderson, Director of Music, Mr Vaughan Meakins

February 5th to February 8th, Manchester

- Chetham's School of Music (Prep and Secondary co-educational, male and female choristers) Headmistress Ms Claire Hickman, Director of Music Mr Stephen Threlfall, Head of Music Curriculum and Director of Choral Music, Mr Martin Bussey. *Chetham's is one of four Music Specialist Schools in the UK*
- Manchester Cathedral, Director of Music Mr Christopher Stokes

February 9th to February 10th, Belfast, Northern Ireland

- Methodist College Belfast (Secondary co-educational) Principal Dr T W Mulryne, Director of Music, Mrs Ruth McCartney

February 11th to February 19th – MID TERM BREAK

February 20th to February 21st Chichester, West Sussex

- The Prebendal School (Pre-prep up to Year 8, co-educational however choristers only male choristers) Headmaster Mr Tim Cannell,
- Chichester Cathedral, Director of Music Mr Alan Thurlow

February 22nd to February 24th, Winchester, Hampshire

- The Pilgrims School (Pre-prep to Year 8 male only choristers – Cathedral Choir and quiristers – Winchester Chapel Choir) Headmaster Dr Brian Rees, Director of Music, Mrs Hilary Webster
- Winchester College (secondary male only) Headmaster Dr Ralph Townsend, Master of Music, Mr Nicholas Wilks, Director of Chapel Choir Mr Christopher Tolley
- Winchester Cathedral, Director of Music Mr Andrew Lumsden, Assistant Director of Music Ms Sarah Baldock. (Ms Baldock trains the female choristers who come from within the Winchester region)

THE FELLOWSHIP

During my six week Fellowship I visited ten schools. To learn more about the chorister experience and discover new techniques that are effective in choral training, I observed rehearsals and performances and discussed with the Directors of Music the design of their programme and issues concerning the current health of the English Choral Tradition and future support of this wonderful education. I was also given the opportunity to search through the repertoire libraries in some of the Cathedrals and was privileged to sit in on singing lessons with Nigel Perrin (Wells Cathedral), David Lowe (St John's College Cambridge), and Hilary Jones (Salisbury Cathedral School).

I was grateful also to be able to observe music lessons in most schools and learn how their classroom music programme is designed and the links, if any, with the chorister programme. As the choristers develop musically through singing, I wondered if this also had a place in the classroom programme and what possible music education philosophies might influence the teaching practices, such as Orff Schulwerk, Dalcroze Eurhythmics and Kodaly. This was a great opportunity to compare the classroom programme I have established at Canberra Grammar Junior School and identify the strengths and weaknesses.

THE CHORISTER EXPERIENCE

To be a chorister in an English Choir School is not for the faint hearted. On four out of five weekdays there are two rehearsals, one in the morning before school and one in the evening, just before choral evensong. Most choristers have a rehearsal on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon if they are performing at Evensong. On Sunday they often have a morning and afternoon rehearsal and sing at Mattins, Eucharist and Evensong. Typically, a chorister can expect to have a minimum of ten rehearsals per week, each lasting between forty-five minutes to an hour and to give approximately eight performances per week. Where a choir school has both male and female trebles, the performance load is shared.

As the choirs are attached to Cathedrals, College Chapels and Churches there are additional performances required and it is not uncommon for the choristers to stay at school during part of their holidays to fulfil these requirements.

Choristers also do recordings, often during their holidays, and also have the opportunity to travel abroad. One young chorister told me that the travel was the most exciting part of being a chorister. There were also those who loved performing and those who simply loved singing.

There is a strong network of professionals who support the choral tradition and ensure that the standard remains high. The Musical Director at the Cathedral, College or Church trains the choristers and all are professional organists. The assistant organist and organ scholars also help with the training. There are also singing teachers and/or vocal coaches who not only work on developing the voice but also help in the preparation of the choral repertoire. They were also instrumental in preparing choristers for music scholarship auditions into secondary colleges and schools

Most choristers are expected to learn two instruments, of which one must be piano. With the exception of The Arts Education School, Wells Cathedral School, and Chetham's Manchester, all choristers are boarders. School academic music staff ensures that the choristers

instrumental development does not suffer by supervising their practice after school. Theory lessons are also often a part of the routine.

There is a great deal of individual dedication, commitment and responsibility required of a chorister and their parents. Choristers are still expected to carry a normal academic and sporting load and to fit in with the everyday expectations and challenges that non-choristers face.

Choristers receive a music scholarship which is funded by the associated Cathedral and covers part of the tuition. The amount of funding varies between places but most scholarships are substantial and there is also the option of further bursaries which are means tested. In the UK, the government does not provide funding to independent schools. For a family who is experiencing financial stress, the student can apply for special funding from the Government.

Most choristers will enter at age 7 or 8 after auditioning successfully before a panel, which includes the Directors of Music (School and Cathedral) and the Headmaster or Headmistress. During the audition the panel looks for musical potential, quality vocal tone, a good ear and innate ability, not necessarily technical prowess on an instrument, though some may have this also. Choristers will then spend their first year as probationers, developing their vocal and aural skills, and learning the repertoire. Probationers spend part of the rehearsal with the choristers and the Director of Music and part of the rehearsal time as a small group with the sub-organist or organ scholars for more individual tuition. Probationers are included in performances once they become familiar with the repertoire.

Of the places I visited, there were between fourteen and twenty-two treble choristers in a choir. The trebles are supported by professional male singers, or in the case of Colleges, Choral Scholars. Choral Scholars receive a small amount of funding and must audition for these positions. The professional male singers are paid. The number of male singers in a choir varies but can be as small as six (two basses, two tenors and two counter tenors) and up to eighteen, which is the case for special services at St Paul's Cathedral, London.

THE MUSICAL ABILITY OF THE TRAINED CHORISTER

The musical and technical standard that the choristers achieve is very high. In rehearsal and performance I observed the following:

- Their intonation was incredibly secure and precise. This was the case even when they were sight singing, not just in well-rehearsed repertoire.
- They were able to hold dissonance against another part securely and easily.
- They easily recognised intervals and were able to sing these, including awkward leaps.
- Their vocal range was extended and most trebles were singing top E's confidently and comfortably, making full use of their head voice.
- The vocal tone was rounded and rich with clear diction.
- They were phenomenal sight-readers. Students undertaking the NSW HSC Music 2 and Extension courses would be envious.
- The repertoire they performed was musically complex and sophisticated and they sang this repertoire effortlessly.
- Their breath control was excellent and allowed them to sustain long legato phrases comfortably with little to no need to stagger the breathing amongst the trebles.

- They had a solid understanding of theoretical aspects of a score and could name and identify musical terms and key modulations quickly. Many were able to recognise and explain compositional devices in scores.
- They behaved and performed as professional singers, which is what they are.

There are obvious reasons why this standard is achievable.

- They are all auditioned so all choristers are innately musical, some more than others.
- They receive a minimum of ten hours rehearsal per week.
- They are performing a minimum of six times per week.
- They receive private or small group singing lessons and/or vocal coaching.
- Their musical development is supported by individual tuition on at least two instruments per week and they often also have a theory lesson.
- They are trained by exceptionally gifted, talented and professional musicians.
- They are immersed in a rich musical environment from an early age, working with professional singers and musicians.

Throughout the Fellowship I wondered if the intensity of the training, and the high level of commitment, would affect the choristers enjoyment of music negatively. This was not the case. On the contrary, the choristers revelled in the musical challenges and responsibilities. They enjoyed their work as professional singers, the relationships they developed with other choristers, organ scholars and the Directors of Music. There was an atmosphere of joy, excitement and camaraderie in rehearsals and it was obvious that achieving this high level of musicianship gave the choristers more than an excellent musical education; it also instilled a sense of pride, self worth and a great love of music.

This confirmed my opinion that people want to be involved in activities where the aim is to achieve the best possible standard. The higher the standard expected and achieved, the greater the enthusiasm. This is why it is so important to establish effective classroom music programmes that are developmental and which build musical skills in students enabling them to achieve musically and thus increase the enjoyment of the experience.

BOY AND GIRL CHORISTERS

It has been documented that boys learn differently from girls. The Choral Programme is no exception. Generally girls learn faster than boys and are more conscientious in rehearsals. It is also easier to achieve consistency with girls' as they do not encounter the difficulties associated with changes in their voices. Having said that, most of the Musical Director's (I interviewed) agreed that in performance, boys always seem to give more than girls.

The most common frustrations that an ex-chorister experiences when moving on to a secondary school is dealing with a slower pace of learning and singing less complex repertoire in a choir which involves students from many different musical backgrounds. Choristers are used to learning a huge amount of repertoire fast, singing complex music and achieving a high musical standard. The challenge for the Musical Director with an ex-chorister is not dealing with a student whose intense training has affected their love of singing, nor encouraging a boy to sing through the change in his voice. They have to make sure the ex-chorister is motivated and challenged by the repertoire and programme so that he or she remains involved chorally throughout their secondary schooling.

THE CLASSROOM PROGRAMME

Pre-prep to Year 6 (Infants to equivalent of our Year 7)

The classroom music programme is separate to the chorister programme and there is little relationship between the two. In some schools the choristers are integrated throughout the school, and in others there exists mild streaming in the music programme with choristers and more musically able students together. Mostly there is one classroom music lesson per week in the higher grades and two per week in the lower grades. With the classes I observed, programmes are designed loosely around the National Curriculum with most following a traditional music appreciation style of music education, covering the areas of composition, listening and performing. Some schools have a more 'hands on' involvement in music making than others and I did see some inspirational lessons using Dalcroze and Kodaly. I was surprised that Orff Schulwerk did not have more of an influence in the classroom, particularly at this pre-secondary stage. Most classrooms are well equipped with technology and much of the composition was computer/keyboard based. I did not see a great range of classroom percussion instruments, tuned or untuned, (Wells was one school that did have quite an array of tuned and untuned Orff instruments) so hands on music making, movement based lessons and instrumental improvisation was not observed.

The majority of students learnt an instrument privately at school and were involved in the various co-curricular ensembles. All schools had various choirs for each age level, some schools offered auditioned choirs only and some schools had auditioned and unauditioned choirs. In most cases, the choristers were not allowed to be part of the school choirs. Singing was a part of the school co-curricular choral programme and was often incorporated in assemblies with hymn singing.

Secondary School

There were four schools I visited that were predominantly secondary or a combination of preparatory and secondary. These were Chetham's at Manchester, The Arts Education School at Tring, Well's Cathedral School and Methody College at Belfast. As in the Australian education system, there was an emphasis in the curriculum towards examinations, the GCSE and the A levels for music. This is the equivalent to the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate in the NSW system.

I mostly observed classes at Methody and Chetham's, so I will focus on these two schools. It is important to note that Chetham's is a music specialist school with entry via audition. I found Chetham's inspirational, not only by the musical standard of the students, but how singing influenced the day to day teaching. On most mornings, students began the day with fifteen minutes of sight singing. To quote Mr Stephen Threlfall, Director of Music, "singing is the vital key in the development of aural skills – rhythm, pitch, harmony. Starting the day with this focuses the minds of the students as well as develops their aural skills". He went on to add that students who entered the school at a later stage, who had had little involvement in singing or in choirs, were behind students of the same age and instrumental ability aurally. Singing was also used as a tool in other lessons such as listening, musicology or composition. It was like a thread that supported and tied all the different components together.

Singing helps students to develop pitch internally and I was impressed that students were encouraged to compose using hand notation first, developing their inner hearing and without the computer as a crutch. They then used the computer in the later stages and for the final

notation. All too often I see students placed before a computer to do their composition without first having developed their ideas internally. In my opinion, this thwarts the creative process by not giving the student the opportunity to develop their inner hearing, and thus the ability to compose internally.

Methody, a comprehensive co-educational high school, offered an excellent grounding musically. Each year level had music instruction, regardless of whether they were taking music as an elective, and singing was an important focus. In forms 4, 5 and 6, they had the Chorus class, which was an innovative way of involving all students in the school musically and ensuring that music is a part of their whole schooling. The classes are organised into vocal ranges - soprano, alto, tenor, bass -and they met once a week in their parts to prepare a major work, such as a Mass or a Cantata. Just prior to the performance, all parts are put together.

Although not a Choir School, Methody offered five choirs, three auditioned, and two unauditioned. The musical standard of the auditioned choirs (Girls Choir, Junior Choir and Chapel Choir) are exemplary. The classroom and co-curricular programme was thorough throughout and was a credit to Mrs Ruth McCartney, Director of Music, and her team.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ENGLISH CHORAL TRADITION

It is obvious that the Choir Schools are continuing to sustain this wonderful musical tradition, thus the top end of the choral spectrum is thriving and healthy. This tradition does not, however, exist to a large degree in the comprehensive school system and choral singing is dwindling within the choirs of the Parish churches.

From my understanding, the comprehensive schools are trying to increase the level of music in the curriculum, but where singing is concerned, particularly in primary education, the emphasis is more on participation rather than developing a quality musical sound. Singing is akin with group therapy rather than as part of a solid music education experience which seeks to develop musical skills, knowledge and musicianship.

Other factors that influence the health of the English Choral Tradition include the rise of the evangelical church and the decline in church attendance. The evangelical church does little to foster or promote the traditional hymns and psalms which form the musical bricks and mortar of the Church of England Service of Worship and which give an excellent grounding musically. They opt for a more contemporary style of musical worship with modern hymns that have an easily identifiable beat and that are influenced by the pop, rock and folk idioms or a combination of all three. These modern hymns lack the musical quality that is present in the traditional psalms and hymns, and do not require a higher level of musical understanding or concentration.

The Church has been one the first places a child could experience a choral education through the singing of the traditional repertoire. This was often their first introduction to a choir and many children began their initial music education through singing in the church choir. Diminishing congregations have resulted in the loss of a choir in some Parish churches. With fewer people having a choral experience at this level, there are less in the community who aware of the opportunity or the benefits of a choral education. Consequently fewer are considering auditioning for a chorister scholarship.

As pointed out, the Cathedrals support the English Choral Tradition by funding the education of the choristers with scholarships. The funding does not come from the Government. This forms a large part of the budget for Cathedrals and some are beginning to experience economic pressures. It has been suggested that should a Cathedral start to struggle financially, it will be the music programme that will suffer. Whilst in the United Kingdom on the Fellowship, Truro Cathedral was experiencing such a dilemma.

SUPPORTING OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE

The English Choir School is a unique establishment internationally. Nowhere else in the world is this form of education so extensive and well supported. There are forty-four schools that make up the choir schools association in the United Kingdom of which three are state schools. The choir school not only offers an excellent musical education for the choristers and non-choristers, but the pursuit of excellence is also seen academically, culturally and in sport. In most choir schools, the majority of students learn an instrument privately and are involved in the various choirs and instrumental ensembles on offer. Thus, musical involvement is as much a part of the non-choristers schooling as it is the choristers.

Apart from these obvious musical and educational benefits that this form of schooling offers, it also has a fundamental role in keeping a wealth of musical repertoire alive. The choir schools uphold the traditions of a skill hundreds of years old, and through performance, ensure that the sacred and secular repertoire of many wonderful composers continues to live and flourish.

CONCLUSIONS

The Fellowship cemented in my mind the value of quality singing as an important tool in the development of musical skills and musicianship and as a medium through which musical excellence in performance can be achieved. Singing should begin in the early stages of a child's development and continue on supporting the musical development of students throughout their schooling.

Probationer choristers begin their training at around 7 years of age. They learn quickly through a combination of instruction and osmosis. At an early age children are like sponges and soak in information. This reinforces the philosophy of many music educators that the earlier you can start a music education programme the better. As Lois Choksy wrote in 'The Kodaly Context' (Prentice-Hall) "It is a curious phenomenon that the older children are when they first come to music the more difficult it is to teach them". Kodaly himself argued that musical learning should begin with the child's own natural instrument, the voice, and at an early age. "It is a long accepted truth that singing provides the best start to music education". (Kodaly *Musical Reading* 1954) "Singing without any instrument, free singing, is the really deep training of the child's musical faculties." (Kodaly "The Popularization of Serious Music" Lecture 1946). For years, music educators have been arguing for the inclusion of sound music education programmes in primary schools, for the right of every child to have a musical education, yet still there exists inconsistency in music education nationally in Australia.

In general in Australia, singing is underused and undervalued in our schools and its potential as the basis on which to build a solid and thorough music education programme, mainly at a

primary/infants level, is not fully realised. There appears to be a decline in the number of students involved in choirs and in some cases, schools do not have a school choir.

At a time when many educational institutions are feeling the pinch economically, it is the Arts which often suffer the most. A choral programme is cheap to run in comparison with an instrumental programme, and when taught well, can be a successful music education programme, classroom and co-curricular. It is vital when including music in the curriculum that it is there for musical and educational benefits, not merely as an activity which has a high level of participation. However, a choral music education programme will involve all children, so participation is high and it is non-selective.

To ensure success musically and chorally does require the skills of a qualified and experienced music educator, one who understands choral technique and choral pedagogy. An educator who is creative, dynamic and resourceful and who can engage, captivate and challenge their clientele, the students. One who understands the meaning of quality and does not compromise this in performance or in the choice of repertoire.

There are numerous benefits from singing and being involved in a choir, from teambuilding to building self-confidence, pride, discipline and self worth. The idea of people getting together to sing has been around for thousands of years. Music and singing is a part of every culture and may be literate (notated) or an oral tradition. It has the ability to bring together people from differing backgrounds and cultures and enriches the soul.

Quality singing teaches:

- pitch
- rhythm
- harmony
- a quality vocal tone
- rounded vowels and good diction
- breathing technique
- posture
- concentration and focus
- listening (as opposed to hearing)

Quality singing develops:

- security of intonation
- unison and independent singing
- ensemble skills
- skills in sight singing
- aural skills
- skills in score analysis
- inner hearing
- a discerning musical ear and an understanding of musical quality
- individual musicianship

Children will be part of anything that challenges them and seeks to achieve the best possible results. Children are proud beings and nothing excites them more than to stand up in front of an audience and be proud of their work and who they are. Therefore, for a music education programme to flourish the emphasis must always be on achieving the best possible musical quality. To accept unmusical singing, either in the context of a choir or when using the voice as a tool in the classroom, will undermine the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is no point in my offering recommendations if I do not practice what I preach. Already I have begun to make use of what I have learnt from this Fellowship in my teaching. I am consciously using singing more as a tool within the classroom to support the development of aural skills, sight singing skills, and quality singing, which in turn supports the musical quality of the choirs. This will further develop the student's vocal skills and improve the musical level, allowing for the choice of more difficult and challenging repertoire. The Fellowship has also empowered me to expect more musically from the younger students, and they are rising positively to this higher benchmark. I hope to raise awareness in the community of the role of choirs and singing as a major component in designing a music education programme at the primary level. It must be noted that at Canberra Grammar Junior School the class music programme is very practically based and influenced by Kodaly, Dalcroze and Orff Schulwerk. Singing and the choral programme are totally integrated into this and all boys from Years 3 to 6 sing in the choral programme.
- Singing should not cease once the student enters high school, but should be an ongoing and integrated part of the whole music education process, especially for the elective music student. Involvement in a choir can only enhance a student's understanding of music, and will continue to support, refine and develop their aural skills and support their development as an instrumentalist.
- It is imperative that any tertiary institution running a Music Education Degree includes singing and choral pedagogy in this course, regardless of a student's main instrument of study. In addition an undergraduate choir as a core component will help reinforce knowledge about choral technique and conducting. A choral experience would also benefit students completing a Music Degree as singing benefits the development of the whole musician. There are many schools where a music programme does not exist, through economics or for other reasons, and all music educators should have the skills to establish a choral based programme which is cheaper than an instrumental programme and musically effective.
- A choral programme is a great way to establish basic skills and compliments all other forms of music tuition.
- A music programme needs a performance outlet and the best possible way of including this and all children, is to have choirs at each level of development, to compliment and support the class programme. This is especially the case for Primary and Infants level. (for example, lower infants, upper infants, lower primary, upper primary) The flip side of the coin is that the class programme also supports the choral programme.

The information gained from this Fellowship will be disseminated through my association with MusicACT and the ACT Music Teachers network, public presentations and relative community organisations and educational institutions. I hope to also communicate the information through my membership in professional organisations such as the NSW Orff Society and ISME (International Society of Music Educators).