

AUSTRALIAN INTERVARSITY CHORAL FESTIVALS

The first annual intervarsity choral festival took place in Sydney in 1950. Since then, festivals have performed with all the ABC orchestras across the country (except the MSO), as well as with the State Orchestra of Victoria, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, the ABC Sinfonia and most state youth orchestras. Festival concerts have been conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, John Hopkins, Albert Rosen, Pinchas Zuckerman, Graham Abbott, John Grundy, Christopher Bell, David Porcelijn, Nicholas Braithwaite, David Kram, Richard Divall, Georg Tintner, David Measham, John Lanchberry, Richard Divall, Roy Wales and Peter Seymour, among others, and have features over a dozen world premiere performances of new Australian repertoire by such composers as Colin Brumby, Andrew Schultz, Anne Boyd, Donald Hollier, Martin Wesley-Smith and Matthew Orlovich. The intervarsity movement has gained an enviable reputation for its high standard of performance, the vitality and spirit of its concerts and its commitment to fostering Australian composition.

Unlike other inter-varsity events, this is not a competition. It is merely a gathering of students of different faculties and from different Universities for the purpose of presenting a choral concert. As such, it has been playing an increasingly important role in the cultural life of Australian Universities.

Concert Programme, 1961
Twelfth Intersivity Choral Festival, Brisbane

I was deeply moved that so many young singers from throughout Australia would take part at their own expense in such an intense musical experience, and I was thrilled with the musical achievement of those two weeks. I think that the Intersivity movement is a valuable and exciting part of Australian choral music.

Professor Rodney Eichenberger, 1980
Then Professor of Choral Conducting, University of Southern California,
now Professor of Choral Education, Florida State University.
Conductor at 1979 Brisbane Intersivity & 1992 Sydney Choral Festival.

PRESS REVIEWS OF PAST IV PERFORMANCES

HOBART 2009

World premieres of Matthew Orlovich's *The Blue Gum Forest* and Don Kay's *Northward the Strait* (first complete performance), with the Hobart Wind Symphony, conducted by Simon Reade and June Tyzack, Stanley Burbury Theatre, Hobart, 20 July 2009.

Elizabeth Ruthven, "Choir celebrates with real gems", *Mercury* [Hobart], 21 July 2009.

The Intersivity Festival Choir joined the Hobart Wind Symphony in a mammoth program for the choir's diamond jubilee ... The most significant works were two world premieres with both composers present ... Commissioned by the festival, Matthew Orlovich created a truly inspiring setting of *The Blue Gum Forest* by Roland Robinson. ... Under Tyzack's direction, the well-balanced and articulate choir added aural tricks to convey scenes evocative of Australian landscape ... Don Kay's *Northward the Strait* was partly written in 1988 to Gwen Harwood's poems about Tasmania's North-West ... The band, choir and soloists gave a sensitive reading throughout this performance. Simon Reade is to be commended for enabling it.

ADELAIDE 2006

David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus* conducted by Timothy Sexton, Grainger Studio, Adelaide, 28 January 2006.

Rodney Smith 'Energy brims over', *Advertiser*, 31 January 2006.

David Fanshawe's rumbustious and popular hit from 1972, *African Sanctus*, proved a perfect

choice for the youthfully exuberant 300-plus Interschool Choir. Two weeks of intensive rehearsal produced not only this enthusiastic and energetic performance but will also hopefully bear fruit in an equally creditable Israel in Egypt at the Festival Theatre on Friday ... Conductor Timothy Sexton kept a firm grip on his eager singers, ably supported by some of Adelaide most experienced players, and they ensured everything fitted ... The Sanctus itself was impressively sung with the "power, rhythm and exuberance" specified by Fanshawe and there were fleeting subtleties in such moments as the end of the *Gloria* and the a cappella section finishing the *Kyrie*.

Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, conducted by Graham Abbott, with the Adelaide Art Orchestra, Festival Theatre, 5 February 2006.

Rodney Smith 'Choir raises roof to praise heaven', *Advertiser*, 6 February 2006.

Handel's *Israel in Egypt* is not all spellbinding music, but it does point the way towards later greater things, with many masterful choruses that bear more than a passing resemblance to the *Messiah* et al. ... And there was no doubt about the enthusiasm and raised standards of the 300-strong (sic) Interschool Choir as it responded to Handel's more inspired writing in the second half following its rather ho-hum rendition of the first half's pestilential problems ... Full marks to their splendidly roof-raising *I will sing unto the Lord, The people shall hear, The lord shall reign* and the final *Sing ye to the Lord*, all of which made the sparks fly around the Festival Theatre with its Lares reverb system seemingly on max ... The Adelaide Art Orchestra gave empathetic support and conductor Graham Abbott brought his customary confidence and enthusiasm to bear throughout the proceedings.

MELBOURNE 2005

Bruckner *Mass in E-minor*, Kodaly *Missa Brevis*, conducted by Jonathan Grieves-Smith, members of Orchestra Victoria, Jonathan Bradley (organ), Melbourne Town Hall, 5 February 1995.

Joel Crotty, 'Chorus celebrating en masse', *Age*, 8 February 1995, p.A3:8

For more than half a century the choral societies from universities across Australia have gathered annually to present a series of concerts ... This year the finale [sic] program focused on Bruckner's E minor Mass and Kodaly's *Missa Brevis*, and the large choir handled the material reasonably well ... [T]he Brucknerian quirks occasionally pushed the choir out of their comfort zone. There were, however, some beautiful moments, particularly in the legato phrasing, while the dynamic shading was given some thoughtful attention.

PERTH 2004

Antonín Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* with the Prague Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Graham Abbott, Perth Concert Hall, 21 February 2004.

Neville Cohn, 'Hobo-inspired masterpiece', *West Australian*, 23 February 2004, p.10.

The next night a full house at the Concert Hall heard Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* ... with the Australian Interschool Choral Societies Association filling the organ stalls almost to overflowing ... One cannot too highly praise the choral singing of the well-trained ensemble ... Tenor Aldo di Toro has never sung better, and mezzo soprano Fiona Campbell was radiant both vocally and visually ... Graham Abbott's direction from the podium brought out the reverence and passion of this masterpiece.

ADELAIDE 2001

Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*, with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Timothy Sexton, Thebarton Theatre, Adelaide, 10 February 2001.

Graham Strahle, "Bernstein Mass", *Adelaide Review*, 8 March.

Preaching 'power to people' and laden with anti-war messages, Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* is either a wildly grandiose example of American social commentary turned art or, more likely, one of the most under-performed and seminal works of the last three decades ... A fully staged performance throws in everything from a 200 piece choir, full orchestra and ballet company to a marching team, rock band and quadraphonic sound system ... What an ideal work it turned

out to be for a national choral meet. Adelaide played host to the most recent national Intersarsity Choral Festival, and scored a major achievement in getting this long, complex and rarely heard work to concert standard in just two weeks. All 160 singers, drawn from around the country, clearly revelled in the work's unbridled power and spirit of communality, with all its hand-clapping, foot-stamping and finger-clicking jive ... here we had a performance that in every respect met one's expectations. With the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, a rock band, keyboards and other assorted extras cramming every inch of the Thebby's stage area ... Timothy Sexton directed the whole thing without raising so much as a drop of perspiration ... The standard of singing was generally very high, and the level of support from the orchestra players outstanding.

BRISBANE 2000

Australian premiere of Roxanna Panufnik's *Westminster Mass* and world premiere of Matthew Orlovich's *Links*, conducted by Michael Fulcher, St John's Cathedral, Brisbane, 15 July 2000.

Patricia Kelly, "Mass Not to be Ignored", *Courier Mail*, 17 July, p.21.

The *Westminster Mass* of young British-Polish composer, Roxanna Panufnik, was but one segment at the finale concert of the 51st Intersarsity Choral Festival at St John's cathedral, Brisbane, yet it made a strong artistic statement ... The subdued 'Kyrie' led into a joyous outburst as the 'Gloria' tones flooded the rafters. Warm choral textures were brilliantly embellished with the piquant flourishes of instrumental tones ... In a night of bonuses, young Sydney composer Matthew Orlovich came to hear the premiere of his choral cycle *Links*, with text by West Australian poet John Kinsella, in which Orlovich explored exotic, biting rhythms to drive his exciting patterns of sound, with a sprinkling of onomatopoeic effects ... Conductor [Michael] Fulcher was undaunted by this enormous task of unifying the various styles, rhythms and counterpoints. In spite of hazards, Fulcher kept the artistic authority of the whole intact.

HOBART 1999

Poulenc Gloria, Cherubini Requiem and world premiere of Andrew Schultz's *Southern Ocean*, with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Porcelijn, Hobart City Hall, 17 July 1999,

John Stafford, "Festival's Choral Crescendo", *Mercury*, 19 July, p.12.

Saturday night's concert brought this year's intersarsity Festival to a conclusion with a choir of around 150 ... It is great that university choirs around the country have been able to come together each year ... Through their enthusiasm, they may have had a tendency to sing too lustily at times ... a greater dynamic range in the singing could have given it more light and shade. Poulenc's *Gloria*, where the choir was joined by soprano Joanna Cole, was a most attractive piece and had an appropriately joyous performance ... With a colourful orchestral accompaniment ... the work [Andrew Schultz's *Southern Ocean*], composer, author and performers received generous applause.

MELBOURNE 1998

Borodin *Polovtsian Dances* and Prokofiev *Alexander Nevsky* with the State Orchestra of Victoria, conducted by Christopher Bell, Melbourne Concert Hall, 3 February 1998.

Clive O'Connell, "A Little Rushin' in the Russian", *Age*, 5 February, p.B5.

Things took a much-needed turn for the better when the intersarsity choir stood up to take part in the night's solitary Tsarist contribution ... The opening *Chorus of Slavewomen* brought a compelling warmth from the alto forces. This kind of singing, ardent and committed, can't be completely explained by the age of most in the choir but youthful enthusiasm must be a factor. When the large male contingent blazed into the Polovtsians' vehement panegyric of Khan Konchak, the concert suddenly came to life. This was excellent singing, a powerful and vehement sound that made you wonder why we endure pallid, by-the-numbers performances from other choral bodies with longer rehearsal time and more experienced singers ... Nevertheless, the pitching from all parts of the choir was remarkably accurate and the large body's attention to note lengths and dynamics exemplary.

Mixed program including the world premiere of Timothy Sexton's *An Australian Alleluia*, conducted by Graham Abbott, St Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne, 7 February 1998.

Clive O'Connell, *Age*, 9 Feb. 1998, p.C5.

As with last Tuesday's *Alexander Nevsky*, the singing reached moments of excellence, even if the patchwork program had a few fillers ... Both Russian works on the program brought out the notable qualities of the choir: a powerful male sound spectrum, distinctive altos, a group of sopranos unafraid of challenges ... splendid music ... The Interschool Choral Festival will not be back in Melbourne for another seven years. On this week's showing it will be worth the wait.

PERTH 1997

Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and the Western Australian premiere of Janacék's *Glagolitic Mass*, with the West Australia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Albert Rosen, Perth Concert Hall, 7 & 8 February 1997.

Neville Cohn "Challenging Mass", *West Australian*, 10 February, 'Today', p.5.

It was an inspiration on the part of the ABC programmers to entrust the first ever account of Janacék's Mass by the WASO to Albert Rosen ... If the 160-strong Interschool Festival Choir's treatment of the word Hosanna in the Sanctus sounded disappointingly tame, its response to the rest of the section was generally excellent as was its presentation of the Kyrie earlier in the piece; its reverential, hushed singing here was an object lesson in what fine ensemble singing is all about. And in the Gloria, an essay in joyous shouting, both choir and tenor Horst Hoffman ... sang as if to the manner born.

CANBERRA 1996

Mixed program including the world premiere of Jacqueline Atherton's *Tableaux of Space, Earth and Sea*, conducted by Kynan Johns and Patricia Shaw, St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka, 20 July 1996.

Margaret Legge-Wilkinson, 'Stimulating Song from Interschool Choir', *Canberra Times*, 24 July, p.14.

The members of the 47th Interschool Choral Festival choir gave a memorable and stimulating evening of choral singing on Saturday night ... [Atherton's] *Tableaux of Space, Earth and Sea* was conducted by Patricia Shaw, who took particular care to bring out the various effects ... and to bring shape and direction to the performance ... For Gabrieli's *O Quam Gloriosa* the choir was positioned antiphonally ... This was a joyous though roughly hewn performance. Henryk Gorecki's *Miserere* conducted by Kynan Johns was emotionally and spiritually fulfilling with Johns holding the reins softly and tightly until the choir exploded into double forte.

SYDNEY 1995

Beethoven *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*, Beethoven *Symphony No.7*, Orff *Carmina Burana*, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, with Gillian Sullivan, Gerald English and John Pringle, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, 27 and 29 January 1995.

Fred Blanks, "An explosion of passion and energy", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 Jan. 1995, p.3.

Few choral works of this century, perhaps none, can engender as immediate a sense of rhythmic and melodic exhilaration as does *Carmina Burana* ... Here is a kind of instant music, as unlike the genuine thing as instant coffee ... Fortunately, the performance by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a choir of 270 voices mostly from various Australian universities currently singing and socialising together in Sydney ... was so charged with energy and passion by conductor Sir Charles Mackerras that not only newcomers to this music (and there cannot be many of those ...) but returnees must have felt that thrill ... But what really electrified the music apart from the brisk tempos was excellent choral attack throughout ... and for the return of Fortune's Wheel, the music became positively orgasmic.

Laurie Strachan, "Carmina Burana", *Australian*, 31 Jan. 1995.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's programmers took advantage of the large number of choristers in town for the Interschool Choral Festival to put on two performances ... and were rewarded with full houses and a popular triumph. Some choral works can sag under the weight of so many voices, but in this case the sheer power produced by 280 singers only added to the appeal of the performance, giving much needed strength and excitement to the rather too familiar *O Fortuna* chorus ... and extra zing to other segments like the beautiful *Flora Silva Nobilis*. The chorus tends to dominate the piece until near the end ... but fortunately the combined choirs were more than up to their heavy workload ... Beethoven's second movement is in the heroic mould of *Fidelio*, and the Interschool singers sang it 'can belto', but to great effect.

David Brown, "Choral triumph", *Australian Jewish News*, February 1995.

The Interschool Choral Festival Choir (a quick head count revealed 240 members) superbly prepared by Ben Macpherson and Neil McEwan, gave everything they had, and to quite splendid effect ... Indeed, the choral singing rose marvellously to climaxes—grand and joyously ebullient. This was a performance with a great many explosions of passionate energy throughout.

Mendelssohn *Hebrides Overture*, Britten *Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes*, Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*, Sydney Youth Orchestra, conducted by Graham Abbott, with Gillian Sullivan and Robert Dawe, Sydney Town Hall, 5 February 1995.

Fred Blanks, "Mighty is the sea", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 Feb. 1995, p.16.

Major English choral works appeared during the early decades of this century with the frequency [with which] ripe plums fall from the trees in a prolific orchard ... Few survive infancy ... One happy exception ... was the *Sea Symphony* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and it received a performance of great conviction and conscientious attentiveness from the Sydney Youth Orchestra and the 46th Interschool Choral Festival Choir conducted with every sign of authority by Graham Abbott ... It has the dimensions of a leviathan as regards weight, length and power, and requires appropriate forces ... This performance engaged some 250 voices ... and there were passages, quite long ones, when the sheer penetrating volume of their singing acted rather like a vocal battering ram ... It was a pleasure to hear such a large choir in an age where large choirs are unfashionable.

ADELAIDE 1994

Elgar *Dream of Gerontius*, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nicholas Braithwaite, with Richard Greager, Rosemary Gunn and Robert Dawe, Adelaide Town Hall, 1 February 1994.

Elizabeth Silsbury, "Dream run for massed choir", *Advertiser*, 3 Feb. 1994, p.24.

For the past week, about 200 students ... have been in camp in Adelaide for their annual wallow in the joys of massed choral singing. The ambitions of this juggernaut are unbounded and are often greeted with some scepticism by experienced choristers. Learn *Gerontius*, one of the most weighty tomes in the repertoire, in a week? Somehow, nearly always, they get themselves to respectable performance standard by the grace of their enthusiasm, their seemingly inexhaustible energy and the self-servicing adrenaline that the whole exercise stimulates ... The choir ... vanquished the sceptics. Rock solid at all times ... the singers produced an impressive mass of well-balanced sound ... What the choir lacked in tone and diction was more than compensated for by the soloists ... Overall, the event was a near-perfect match of needs and resources.

HOBART 1992

Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, members of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (harpsichord: Geoffrey Lancaster), conducted by John O'Donnell.

I.K. Harris, "A graduation on the grand scale", *Mercury* [Hobart], 5 Feb. 1992, p.19.

As the climax of the 43rd annual festival, an amassed choir of more than 100 singers drawn from musical societies of 10 universities, with six soloists and an orchestra of 20 conducted by the eminent musicologist and musician John O'Donnell, performed Claudio Monteverdi's

Vespro della Biata [sic] *Vergine* in Hobart's unprepossessing barn-like City Hall ... The very large choir delivered the words crisply, rhythms brisk and accurate, and with a high degree of dynamic and tonal variation; a memorable performance voted as excellent by the large audience.

PERTH 1990

Holst *Hymn of Jesus*, Colin Brumby *Three Baroque Angels*, Handel *Dixit Dominus*, Western Australian Youth Orchestra, conducted by John Grundy.

Dita Gevans, "Youthful show of fine form", *West Australian*, 8 Feb. 1990, p.49.

The 41st Interschool Choral Festival ended with the Festival Choir and the WA Youth Orchestra joining forces in a concert that was sold out. The choir – 150 singers from several Australian university choirs – produced an expansive and mellow sound based on well-controlled dynamics and carefully shaded tone colour... The choir coped remarkably well [in Handel's *Dixit Dominus*], particularly during the final movement. Throughout the evening the WA Youth Orchestra not only proved the ideal support for the singers but also showed exceptional skill.

CANBERRA 1989

Kodaly *Missa Brevis*, Verdi *Four Sacred Pieces*, Brahms *Song of Destiny*, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hans Günther Mommer.

Margaret Legge-Wilkinson, "Spirited singing and enthusiasm add dynamics to festival", *Canberra Times*, 19 July 1989, p.37.

Enthusiasm and spirited singing were the most noticeable elements in this concert ... The choir heartily sang its way through the romantic works of Brahms and Verdi and the drama of Kodaly's *Missa Brevis*. The brief nostalgic finale of Brahms's [sic.] *Song of Destiny* (Op. 54) was given much emotive force by the Interschool Choir from the sustained, resonant, soft moments to the anguished cries of the agitato section.

SYDNEY 1988

Gustav Mahler, Symphony no. 8, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Charles Dutoit, with Joan Carden, Amanda Thane, Jennifer Bates, Elizabeth Campbell, Bernadette Cullen, Horst Hoffmann, Michael Lewis, Donald Shanks and the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, 25 and 27 August 1988.

Jill Sykes, "Barrage of monumental Mahler", *Sun-Herald*, 28 Aug. 1988, p.112.

There's no doubt about Mahler in monumental mode. It may not be the most satisfying musical experience, but as an event it is irresistible ... There were only about 600 in this performance, but even that lesser [sic.] total took up nearly one quarter of the Opera House Concert Hall ... The result of [the performers'] efforts was a thrilling barrage of well focused and keenly balanced sound, contrasting with quieter passages of equal intensity ... it was certainly a magnificent achievement and a memorable concert

Martin Long, "Big performance of a monumental work", *Australian*, 29 Aug. 1988, p.10.

By any measure it was a big event ... Impressive from the outset and moving in its cumulative effect, it was a rare thing – a performance of a huge, difficult and unfamiliar work where nothing faltered and no allowances were needed to be made. The choirs were well-prepared and responsive, the orchestral playing first class.

Roger Covell, "Standing room only as Mahler's army invades the auditorium", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 Aug. 1988, p.79.

The assembled music-makers leapt into full-throated attack or settled into careful reconnaissance with admirable decisiveness. As a whole, singers and players had many reasons to feel proud to be associated with this occasion ... the amount and quality of the choral contribution, which is the main element in larger numbers, were more than acceptable. There

were some thrilling choral sounds, both loud and soft, and much certainty and readiness, notably in the intricate changes of vocal texture of the first movement.

ADELAIDE 1987

Vaughan Williams 'Mass in G minor', conducted by Peter Deane, St Peter's Cathedral, 30 August 1987.

Harold Tidemann, 'Golden tapestry of sound', *Advertiser*, 1 September 1987, p.10.

[A] musical treat of the highest order ... seldom has such beautiful singing been heard here ... A perfect blend of voices was achieved in the well-balanced choir and the floating effect of the rise and fall of tone was heavenly.

MELBOURNE 1983

Verdi *Requiem*, Elizabethan Melbourne Orchestra, conducted by Richard Divall, with Nance Grant, Margreta Elkins, Anthony Benfell, Clifford Grant, Melbourne Concert Hall, 28 May 1983.

John Sinclair, 'Memorable 'Requiem'', *Herald*, 30 May 1983, p.17.

[A] wonderfully committed performance free from the slightest trace of amateurism. No doubt anyone who had not heard an intervarsity choir before would have been astonished by the spirit with which these 250 choristers sang.

Ian Hunt, 'A Mighty Massed Effort', *Australian*, 30 May 1983.

Ranged on three sides above the orchestra, the choir made an impressive sight and sang with superbly controlled dynamics and great beauty of tone. There was never a hint of coarseness.

SYDNEY 1982

Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*, ABC Sinfonia, conducted by Georg Tintner, with Marjorie Shephard, Patricia Price, Raymond McDonald, Grant Dickson, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, 21 May 1982.

Patricia Brown, 'Intervarsity magnificent', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 1982, p.8.

It was fitting that the shining highlight of this performance on Friday was the contribution of the 200-strong, Australia-wide intervarsity choir, assembled this year in Sydney for its annual choral festival. The *Missa Solemnis* is never an easy work for any choir to bring off successfully, fraught as it is with sustained high singing for the soprano section and the need for varied yet full-bodied attack throughout. On this occasion, the well-prepared choir responded magnificently to the challenges, rewarding Georg Tintner's whole-hearted direction with a generous, clear-edged choral response.

PERTH 1990

'Dark Side of the Moon: A Choral Rock Concert' (choral arrangements of music by Queen and Pink Floyd), conducted by David Measham, Somerville Auditorium, UWA, 3 February 1990.

Michael Sinclair-Jones, *West Australian*, 4 Feb. 1980.

In a brave experiment that ended in triumph, 150 singers, seven soloists and six rock musicians ... brought the music of Pink Floyd, Queen, Neil Young and Jeannie Lewis to an enthusiastic audience ... The 150 singers asserted themselves with the wordless 'Atom Heart Mother' and handled well the complex echo structures ... The concert ended with a standing ovation after two encores as conductor David Measham, in a quiet dig at his purist critics[,] applauded the singers and the choice of material for the programme.

MELBOURNE 1978

Rossini *Stabat Mater*, Berlioz *Te Deum*, conducted by John Hopkins, with Rhonda Bruce, Lauris Elms, Gerald English, Bryan Dowling and the Orchestra of the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne Town Hall, 27 May 1978

Eric Austin Phillips, 'Enjoying themselves', *Herald*, 29 May 1978, p.21.

It would be interesting to know how many professional musicians still enjoy their work ... The combined Australian and New Zealand choirs of the 29th Interschool Choral Festival came together for the sheer enjoyment of making music. This is not intended as a condescending excuse for non-professionals who make a very fine attempt—as indeed they did. Enthusiasm and total commitment of this kind is catching ... The effort of two weeks rehearsal under chorusmaster Val J. Pyers was evident in the sureness and control of the vocal lines. In the Rossini 'Stabat Mater' there was some particularly fine unaccompanied singing and the operatic nature of the music was suitably pointed up by [the] soloists.

SYDNEY 1975

Verdi *Requiem*, conducted by Peter Seymour, with Nance Grant, Lauris Elms, Raymond McDonald, Grant Dickson and Australian Youth Orchestra, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, 30 August 1975, part of Rostrum '75.

Fred Blanks, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1975, p.7.

Healthy and massive tones of awe faithfully reflected the head-count of performers in Verdi's Requiem ... some 340 singers from the 26th Interschool ... the 76-member Australian Youth Orchestra ... and one conductor, Peter Seymour, labouring like a windmill in the grip of inspiration. One felt consistently that the performers rose to the occasion, not (as often happens in this kind of musical socialising) that the occasion fell to meet them. Having begun the concert, held under Rostrum '75 with the premiere of a fine-crafted, robustly attractive, unaccompanied Festival Jubilate ... the choir optimised Verdi's dramatic contrasts ... by ascending thrilling climaxes and hushing its pianissimos with disciplined refinement.