

## HELP NEEDED

The Muse is looking for volunteers to help us paint and clear the garden of a house for our drumming tutor and his family to move into. We've secured a deal with a potential landlord to keep the rent accessible for at least two years in return for clearing the garden and painting the house. We need someone to coordinate the project and volunteers to help us with painting a garden clearing. If you can help, please get in touch.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with typing evaluations, putting up posters/distributing events guides, folding and helping with occasional mail outs, making phone calls and liaising with schools. Please get in touch if you would like to help out with any of these tasks.

## KODALY TEACHER TRAINING

I am putting this newsletter together on the eve of my last day of a two week training programme in the Kodaly approach to music education. As Lee described in her article, it is an incredible approach that if implemented in schools would raise a generation of completely literate, independent musicians. I have been learning alongside a group of high school and primary school music teachers who are very inspiring in their dedication and desire to improve their teaching practice. Resourcing for music education has been seriously down graded over the last decade, and yet, I realise I am part of a large body of people, determined to make music accessible to all. Watch this space for developments of how we will bring this incredible programme to Christchurch!

Nikki Berry

## COMBINED CONCERT – HOHEPA

I was very pleased with our recent combined concert of Out of the Blue and Women In Harmony.

Out of the Blue opened the event resplendent in an array of blue tonal clothes and there was nothing blue about their performance. They were engaging and polished. I was transformed to a place of tranquillity by the rain forest song, imagining I was standing surrounded by a diverse range of plants and animals. I loved Sally's introductions and the range of music from the Andrews Sisters, through to the gospel song Operator culminating in a dynamic solo by the outstanding Fleur who put her heart and soul into the song, providing a definite wow factor to end the first half.

The home baking was obviously enjoyed by the audience over rousing conversation with much milling and congratulating Out of the Blue for their stunning performance.

Following the break, Women in Harmony sang the Samoan welcoming song Savalivali Mai, gifted to the choir by Papa Joe, chief of the Poutasi Village. There was again a variety of cultures celebrated from the Shetlands; Samoan, Aboriginal, Maori waiata, Latin jazz, traditional American and gospel. Our delight in the songs sung was evident on the faces of the choir as they smiled and engaged with the audience.

It is always great to hear the buzz of the audience sharing their enthusiasm for what they have experienced, as it is a privilege to share our love of music and singing together as a choir. We look forward to our next opportunity to share our music.

Judi Smitheram, Women in Harmony



Greetings to all our Friends and friends,  
We have so much to say this time that I've just deleted my editorial to make space for all the fabulous articles our members have sent in! Read on for wonderful news and reviews!

Nikki Berry

## AFRICAN DRUMMING WITH KOFFIE

My daughter, Stella, 11yrs, and I were recently both very excited to be part of an African Drumming Workshop. Our instructor, Koffie, had a welcoming smile and calm, relaxed presence that quickly put us at ease as he explained how to position our drums and some basic hand drumming techniques, then got us all going with the first of a number of easy drum beat combinations and as things progressed included a few African chants to go with them.

He was very encouraging, especially to the younger members of our group, giving them chances to shine if they wished. By the end of the workshop the humour and sense of achievement shared seemed to have really connected us as a group, with everyone looking more energised and upbeat. I also felt completely de-stressed, like there really was a therapeutic benefit to drumming.

Stella told me later it had been a lot of fun for her, and both of us felt good about how many different drum combinations we'd been able to remember and play.

I would like to wholeheartedly recommend Koffie's African Drumming Workshops to others. He was always approachable and helpful, and his teaching style was excellent. Stella and I are looking forward to attending more drumming workshops.

Patrice Kelly





So what did we actually do? Along with jazz students, high school students, choir singers/leaders and music teachers we learnt, remembered, sang, clapped, played, laughed and moved. We stretched our brains and our bodies a little too! We learnt some different ways to teach our ears, great tips for breathing and singing better and some cool songs and folk dances. Many of us found our areas of challenge! And James somehow helped us to laugh about it! And

## KODALY IN CHRISTCHURCH

When The Muse recently brought James to Christchurch I managed to attend all of his sessions and I'm so glad I did. Each showed a slightly different angle but left me feeling that here is a portal to a new dimension! A bright new world we had only previously glimpsed where everyone has the opportunity to develop their whole musical brain from a young age, or from wherever they're starting. And it turns out they've already done this in Hungary, Kodaly's home country. And James Cuskelly is making it happen in Brisbane among other places with his passionate commitment to music education at all levels.

I don't think I've ever come across such an engaging, inspiring, capable and passionate teacher! And he has a deep understanding of people's learning processes, not just mentally but emotionally, socially and spiritually. For me this was the delicious icing on the sumptuous cake. I hope the families who have the benefit of his teaching their young children for 20 minutes a day at school, and then through the years to high school know how lucky they are!

improve quickly too.

I am very keen to attend his two week summer school in Brisbane in January and to support the development of local opportunities. Like many who attended I just want more! As soon as possible.

Yes a lot of what we have been doing has been taking us along this road. And somehow it seems so right I don't know why I didn't already know it. For me it brings a lot of strands together with some bright shiny new ones intertwined.

While some of us may feel grief at what we didn't have in our previous music education there is also incredible excitement and an awakening of a deep longing tinged with hope. Yes, perhaps it is actually possible, even at this late stage, to experience an integrated holistic and enjoyable learning process which fills in the gaps, engages us heart, mind, body and soul together in quality music making. James says so and I believe him!

Lee Lawrence

We are very grateful to the Canterbury Community Trust for their recent grant to help us run our general programme.



## COMBINED CHOIRS IN THE HARBOUR

Those of us who were around in the days before TV and computers feel some nostalgia for the fun social nights we had down at the community hall. It would maybe have been a concert put on by some locals or a games evening etc but there was always a "bring a plate" supper with big-pot tea. People getting together and making fun.....great memories from childhood. Lucky for us, such events are still happening today.

It was a pleasure for me as a member of Acapellago (led by Nikki Berry) to be invited by the Diamond Harbour Singers (led by Rachel Bayliss) to join with them in a mid-Winter concert down at their local Community Hall (complete with "bring a plate" supper and big-pot tea – yippee!). Adding to the adventure some of us with audience members travelled over on the DH ferry.

This is the 4th or 5th time Acapellago has joined the DH Singers for this annual event so it's turning into a bit of a tradition.

It is very rewarding to stand face to face and together with another choir and an audience to perform, hopefully in a way which makes it worth everyone's while coming out in the dark and cold. For me, it was a great success!

It was about people coming together and doing their best to make beautiful music and enjoy homemade food, chat and laughter in a cosy hall. It was conviviality on a cold Winter night and you can't get that from your smartphone.

Thanks Diamond Harbour Singers, for your singing and for organising such a wonderful night.

Thanks Nikki for what you've done with our choir and thanks to you and Rachel and all the Muse team for your energetic conviviality, for bringing real people together for real fun – the stuff best memories are made of.

Thanks to Gary Easterbrook whose work, musicianship and friendship are irreplaceable in our performance.

Thanks also to our wonderful guest singer Mayouri, who sang (while we "OM"ed) an authentic and inspiring mantra to Ganesha – the Hindu god of success, the destroyer of vanity and lord of beauty in art and wisdom. I think it worked its magic and was the highlight of the night for me. Lets hope we hear more from you.

And thanks from me to all Acapellago – we scrubbed up quite well I reckon.

Ken Rapson