

# Muse News

Newsletter of  
THE MUSE  
Community Music Trust  
Summer 2020

## Hello to all our Friends,

I'm sorry that you haven't had a newsletter from us for a whole year! We've had some struggles with capacity over the last twelve months, and I kept feeling like I was repeating myself, so we are thinking we will go to a model of a yearly update instead of once a term.

First, I'd just like to thank you all for continuing to be a Friend of The Muse. Even though we don't see some of you regularly, that yearly commitment you've made to support us helps us to feel connected to you, and gives us confidence that others appreciate what we do.

Since Nadia left, I invested quite a bit of time training various people who put up their hands to replace her, only to find they actually didn't have the time to do the job. For this reason, you haven't received a reminder of your subs, so we will be adjusting them all to give you a 'grace period'. You will receive a reminder in the coming weeks. If you no longer wish to keep your annual 'Friend' donation going, now would be a good time to let us know.

The good news is that we have a new volunteer who has taken on the financial part of Nadia's work. This newsletter is a chance to touch base with you again, introduce some new faces and share a few high points from the year.

We are also seeking volunteer and/or paid part time people to help with promotion. Get in touch if you are interested.

Over summer, I'm personally enjoying a chance to get into the garden, do lots of musicianship

practice and play my classical guitar, although I am reeling with sadness on what has unfolded across the Tasman.

If you are missing your music activities, Rory runs his 'Seasons of Song' on Wednesday evenings through January. Everyone is welcome. 7.30pm at The Hub until February when Open Song and the new term begins.

Best wishes, Nikki Berry

## New Faces

We are delighted to introduce our new volunteer administrator, Teresa Hefford. Teresa sings in the Sumner Rockers of Ages, and has retired from her job as a legal P.A. Teresa is very meticulous and is enjoying the challenge of learning new systems. Jacinta will continue to handle phone enquiries, but when you email [admin@themuse.org.nz](mailto:admin@themuse.org.nz) with queries about courses and payments, Teresa is who you are talking to.



## New Trustee – Mark Darbyshire

I sing in A Capellago World Music Choir. I also do a lot of theatre, improv, and comedy, and help out at Little Andromeda (Christchurch's coolest new fringe venue). By day I develop official statistics.



## We have a Treasurer!

Introducing Nicole Taylor. It's been a long search, but we are delighted to announce that finally we have a new Treasurer.

Nicole has worked as a senior accountant at Noel Walton & Associates Limited for the past six and a half years and recently completed her Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in accounting. This year she will be studying towards becoming a Chartered Accountant. We are so excited and grateful to have Nicole's expertise and to have her on the team.



## Thanks to our supporters!

We have received two significant grants in the last year. Rata Foundation has given us \$13000, a sum which allows us to cover a great deal of our running costs, meaning we can keep our classes affordable.

In addition, the Christchurch City Council has supported Rockers of Ages choirs with a grant of \$10,000. This means we can support the choirs in all four rehearsal opportunities. Along with donations from our rockers the choirs are almost self-funding with this level of support.

The grant is also a recognition of the value of the choirs in people's lives.

## Trustee Retiring

We thank Pippa Davies for her past involvement as a Trustee. Pippa has recently resigned as a Trustee, but continues to sing in the Rockers of Ages and A Capellago and volunteers for The Muse by taking care of our banking each week.

*The Muse gratefully acknowledges the support of the Christchurch City Council & the Rātā Foundation*

## Our Role At The Hub – Jacinta O'Reilly

The Muse is committed to supporting the Phillipstown Hub, where we are based, as a collaborative partner. The structure of the Hub is based on innovative thinking about collaborative relationships and the Muse has been closely involved as this structure has developed.

I am near the end of my two year term on the Leadership group as a representative of Hub tenants. This is one of two spaces for tenants on the group which also has two representatives of the Phillipstown Community Centre (who hold the lease and have a governance role) and four spaces for local representatives. The leadership group is a middle ground between governance and management, gathering information and responses, considering and advising around the many decisions that are made about how to best meet the needs of the community, tenants and users of our space.

We have worked hard to make this partnership efficient, constructive, responsive to the many needs of stakeholders, and transparent. It has been a learning journey for everyone involved and I think we have managed to make a difference to the community and to tenants.

The annual Gala day is coming up on Feb 14 at 5pm. Volunteers are most welcome, it's a great way to get involved. Contact me if you would like to know more. [info@themuse.org.nz](mailto:info@themuse.org.nz)

## A Royal Performance

The Rockers of Ages were invited to perform for the Duchess of Cornwall, Camilla Parker Bowles, and for participants in the Senior Chef programme, in an event that featured innovative programmes for older people. It was interesting to be involved in this event, and some members of The Rockers found it a particularly thrilling experience.



## From Our Tutors



### The Keepsake Singers – Steve Langley

I'm looking forward to another year of singing lots of favorite songs with the Keepsake Group. Everyone is welcome and we usually have between 15 and 20 people. Many have some memory loss and find that when they sing, with the words projected on the screen, the music acts like a memory boost, and they quickly remember those songs and lots of others. There are more people coming now who have support for mental health or intellectual disabilities, and they love the singing. Everyone can make requests from a list of about 180 songs – and with favorites like "Oh When the Saints" and "Ten Guitars" some will be dancing as well. We're all smiles as we have a cup of tea afterwards, with people saying how much they enjoy singing together, and how they look forward to being back next week.

### SingGym – Lisa Tui

Each term teaching and facilitating SingGym and individual singing sessions at the muse is pure joy for me. Each singers abilities and learning processes are so varied and precious! It feels like such a privilege to witness and support a person come into their own unique, strong and clear voice.



In reflection what I've learnt about finding ones own voice is when we stop trying to sound like others, sing like a 'good' singer and do things the 'right' way a door opens to the possibilities of our real voice with its strength, colour, flexibility and expressiveness.

We tackle many techniques, practise skills and songs together. With more and more assurance I find people venture into trying new sounds and musical challenges and oh wow it's fun, thrilling!

I'm exciting about 2020 and ever ready to partner singers along their pathway to singing fully, with gusto and beauty. Wee hee!



### West African Drumming – Maganui Stewart

Over the last few years of teaching West African drumming I have been able to witness the growth of a supportive drum family made up of a variety of ages and experiences from all walks of life. I have seen participants increase their knowledge and ability in playing complex rhythms, taking a lead role, playing the supporting drums (Duns) and becoming confident in singing in different languages and on some occasions dance. West African music is not just about hand drumming, but understanding the songs, stories and dances from where the rhythm originates.

As a teacher I am humbled by the support and encouragement from participants as well as The Muse as I grow my own unique style as a teacher which is displayed in how quickly my

students pick up complex rhythms over 1 or 2 sessions.

When I began my journey in teaching West African Drumming and song I did not imagine that I would someday make it across the other side of the world. This year I did. I went to Ghana for two months to learn drumming, dance, songs and culture from the source as part of a 3 week tour and then stayed on on my own.

I fundraised, was given loans to help and I am so grateful. I am hoping to present my experiences on a night where I can share the tour I took part in, the amazing group African Dance Ensemble that we learnt from and also life after the tour, the places I went and the people I met and my plans for the future.



### Rockers of Ages – Nikki Berry

Sometimes I think I have the best job in the world. I get to hang out with a bunch of lovely people who are highly motivated to both improve their singing and make strong connections with each other. Since undertaking the Kodály training my own musicianship has improved and hence my expectations of what I can achieve with our choirs has also increased. Many people didn't originally sign up for musical 'self improvement' The focus of the choirs originally was very much on social connection. I'm delighted that when I ask for requests, people don't shy away from our more challenging material, and long gone are the days when people complain about songs not being in English! I'm also continually impressed with just how supportive and welcoming people are.

### Random Acts of Music – Nikki Berry

For those who haven't experienced our Random Acts of Music, R.A.M. for short, it is something we don't do very often because it takes a lot of effort to set up. One of our Trustees, Jacinta O'Reilly, is a particular champion of the transformative possibilities of this event, and I'm grateful that she reminds me of this when I feel lazy at the idea of dragging the trailer out and packing it up with all our instruments!

For me, it's not just that people are getting to participate in a musical activity. What makes it exciting is the individual growth that is happening, where people are learning to really listen and respond to the music. It is very exciting when virtuosic musicians join in and trade solos with beginners, including children. I love the surprises that come with group improvisation and the challenges that come with trying to bring it together with minimum verbal input.

My favourite R.A.M. so far was at the 2018 Drumming Festival. Doug Brush and Justin DeHart, both passionate music educators and virtuosic players, joined in with Gary and me. Very soon, instead of me conducting the breaks and solos, people had learnt to listen to the drummers for their cues. I was able to let go of the reins and be part of a magical musical moment.

Gary and I are excited to be collaborating again with Doug Brush next week as part of the 1.5 degrees live event outside the Art Gallery. (Friday, 31 January at 5.30pm). This event has people reading the IPCC report throughout the week. We plan to enhance the reading with music. Hope to see some of you there.

#### TO BOOK:

all courses (including externally administered) can be booked through our website: [www.themuse.org.nz](http://www.themuse.org.nz) or phone 0800themuse (0800 843 687) email: [info@themuse.org.nz](mailto:info@themuse.org.nz)

